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Marguerite de Angeli--Writer and Illustrator for Children

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"When you come to a stone wall, if you look far enough, you will find a door in it," was a saying handed down in the family of Marguerite Lofft de Angeli. Not until after she married and her five children were nearly grown, did she find the door in the wall to her creative talent. Although she had always wanted to draw and to write, these dreams did not materialize until years later.

Some of her earliest memories of the little town where she was born, Lapeer, Michigan, include large family gatherings and story-telling by her grandparents and her father, who was a born storyteller. Later, the family moved to Philadelphia, and for a time she considered a career in music. However, she put aside her ambitions of being an artist, a writer, or an operatic star, and married. Several years after her marriage, the opportunity came to study drawing, and she turned seriously to writing and drawing.

Her first publications were two little picture-story books for the pre-school child and beginning reader: *Ted and Nina Go to the Grocery Store* (1935) and *Ted and Nina Have a Happy Rainy Day* (1936). The everyday activities of Ted, age four, and Nina, six, were continued in *A Sum-*

mer Day with Ted and Nina (1940). In easy words, short sentences with just enough repetition for the youngest reader, pleasing pictures on every page, these books were but fore-runners of greater ones to come. They do not pretend to literary quality, but do show some of Marguerite de Angeli's leading characteristics as writer and illustrator for children: her flare for realism, delicate colored illustrations, eye for small details, natural dialogue, and ability to think in terms of a child.

With these simple little stories, Marguerite de Angeli opened the door in the wall to the domain of children's books. With *Henner's Lydia* (1936) she entered and has become one of the leading writers and illustrators in this field.

Practically all of her books have a close connection with her life. Living in Philadelphia, she came to know the Pennsylvania Dutch with their quaint speech and interesting customs. Out of this acquaintance she wrote *Henner's Lydia*, *Skippack School*, *Thee*, *Hannah!* and ¹Associate Professor of English, Murray State College, Murray, Kentucky. Next month's leading article will deal with the work of Elizabeth Yates, luncheon speaker at the Council's Boston meeting.

Yonie Wondernose. After traveling on the Gaspé Peninsula in Canada and becoming acquainted with a French family, very much like the one in the book, she wrote *Petite Suzanne*. *Copper-Toed Boots* is based on stories her father told of his doings and misdoings when he was a little boy in Northern Michigan.

In her Newbery acceptance speech,² Mrs. de Angeli gave other interesting details which show how closely connected her writings are to her life. For instance, *Up the Hill*, a story of a Polish family living in a mining town in Pennsylvania, was the outgrowth of several fatcors. One was seeing Polish names, when she was young, and thinking how unpronounceable they were. Then later, through her hobby of music, she met some Polish people who also loved music, and from them came the idea of writing *Up the Hill*. She also mentions that when the de Angelis were building a house near Tom's River, New Jersey, the setting for *Jared's Island*, the story suggested itself. She chose the name of her husband's Scottish great-grandfather, Jared Craig, as the name for the leading character. *The Door in the Wall*, she thinks, was probably the outgrowth of her childhood reading and stories her grandfather, who came from England, had told her. The prototype for the hero is one of her friends and neighbors, a musician, who is lame, but has a beautiful character and has led such a useful life that he is an example to all who know him.

Not only has Mrs. de Angeli woven into her stories experiences from her own

²Marguerite de Angeli, "Newbery Acceptance Speech," *The Horn Book Magazine* XXVI (July-August, 1950), pp. 252-262.

life, but she has created characters, vividly alive, and interpreted their everyday world clearly and sympathetically. These are the chief elements of realism for which Mrs. de Angeli is noted.

One approach to realism is by way of regional stories. Since World War II, fewer books about other lands are being written and more and more about the United States, which is made up of many regions with different kinds of people and customs. There is a feeling that if we interpret our own country and its people to our children at an early age, we can establish certain habits of thinking and feeling which will cause them to understand and appreciate, rather than tolerate, people of different races, creeds, or even backgrounds. Here regionalism in children's literature enters.

Good regional literature, while portraying people with different manners and customs, really emphasizes universal qualities common to all, such as love of home and family, desire for achievement, fears of various kinds, acceptance by groups, and response to beauty. Such books take children beyond their own locale or day and help them see how little after all are the basic differences between people. The child can identify himself with the hero or heroine, making his thoughts, feelings, and motives his own.

Marguerite de Angeli has made an inestimable contribution to children's literature through her regional stories of the Pennsylvania Dutch of a few years ago—the Amish, Mennonites, and Quakers—of the Negroes, the Polish, and the French Canadians; and also through her historical fiction. Practically, all of her major works

show her interest in so-called minority groups and other times and places.

The first one, *Henner's Lydia*, is about a little Amish girl, who lived on a farm in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Her father was Henry Stolfus, but everybody called him Henner; therefore the title of the story, *Henner's Lydia*. Lydia loved to have her father take her on his lap and tell how her great-great-grandfather, along with others, came to America to worship God in their own way. She had heard Granny tell how these people decided to dress plainly and keep themselves away from worldly things, to help each other in every way, and to be always peaceful.

Children reading *Henner's Lydia* and *Yonie Wondernose*, which tells of Lydia's younger brother, find the dress and customs of the Amish delightfully described. These people wear the same kind of clothes that their great-grandparents wore. Lydia is pictured wearing a rather long dress with a dark apron, a bonnet something like a Quaker, and a shawl instead of a coat. Her older sister wears a white lawn cap like her mother's because she now belongs to the church. Yonie wears a broad hat just like Pop's—straw in summer and black felt in winter—high black shoes, and trousers that came half way down to the ankles. Mom cut Yonie's hair around a bowl over his head just like Pop's. His father wears a beard, such as all Amishmen wear. His coat must have no buttons, just hooks and eyes. Unnecessary buttons are used to hold up trousers and to fasten girls' aprons and dresses. Henner has electricity in the barn to use for work. "It would be a luxury to have it in the house and luxury is worldly."

Such particulars merely set off Lydia and Yonie as individuals and the Amish as Americans with somewhat different customs. On the other hand, like any other children they go to school and exchange some of their good homemade food in their lunch for "boughten." They linger and play on their way home from school and have their chores.

Lydia had a most satisfying home life with just the love and security all children desire. On market day after coming home and eating supper, Lydia climbed up on Henner's knee. Yonie was already on the other knee and Nancy was asleep on the floor. Pop began to sing a lullaby and nodded for mother to come take Yonie.

Lydia's head sank lower and lower. Pop slid her down off his knee onto her feet. He guided her up the stairs carrying the lamp in one hand and helping Lydia with the other. . .

When Father came up again carrying Nancy, there was Lydia sound asleep on her knees with her arms stretched out across the bed! Henner picked her up and gently tucked her in beside Nancy. He had pulled the quilt up under her chin—Henner's Lydia.

In her Newbery acceptance speech³, Mrs. de Angeli mentions that in gathering material for *Henner's Lydia*, she made a sketch of a hundred-year-old barn, which burned a few hours later. The story of the fire did not fit into *Henner's Lydia* but later became the basis for *Yonie Wondernose*, which tells of seven-year-old Yonie who was called a Wondernose because he wanted to know about everything. "Don't be a Wondernose now—remember you are the man of the house—take care of the barn creatures," said Pop as he and Mom

³*Ibid.*, p. 255.

with Malinda and Lydia were leaving to be gone overnight. Because he and Pop had a secret, Yonie thought, "I'll show him how big and smart I can be!" Yet Yonie almost forgot to get Dunder, the bull, out of the burning barn for stopping to look at the red fire engine. Would Pop say, "Now you are too little still for me to keep that promise?" How Yonie won his father's approval and the wonderful reward happily concludes the story.

The illustrations in *Henner's Lydia* and *Yonie Wondernose*, done in four colors and in black-and-white, are lovely. Especially appealing are the scenes of the animals and farm life in *Yonie Wondernose*. The end papers picture the layout of the Amish Community in one and the barn and house with the countryside as a background in the other. The quaint Pennsylvania Dutch decorations on the title pages somehow set the mood and atmosphere for each story.

Praising the illustrations in *Henner's Lydia*—and those in *Yonie Wondernose* are just as lovely—Hendrik Van Loon wrote:

A most fortunate example of what a children's book should be . . . The pictures are the sort children will like because they are completely self evident and belong in a book of this sort as maple sugar belongs to waffles.⁴

With *Thee, Hannah!* Mrs. De Angeli added another panel to her pictures of Pennsylvania Dutch life. This deals with the Quakers some time before the Civil War. The central character, Hannah, a gay, lovable little nine-year-old, was rebellious toward the somber dress and plain

bonnets of the Quakers. She longed for frills and pretty clothes and most of the complications grew out of her attempts to satisfy these desires. For instance, there was the time she borrowed Cecily's sash and soiled it so she had to go without her allowance to buy another. Again, she cut up one of her mother's wedding petticoats to make pantalettes. These hankerings often brought forth from her elders the admonition "Thee, Hannah!" Her mother reproved her by telling her that she had listened to Old Spotty (Satan, who makes people do and say things they should not). At last, Hannah won her parents' approval on the night when her plain Quaker bonnet led her to help an escaping Negro slave. Hannah learned at last the meaning of her Quaker dress.

Besides the Quaker dress and manner of speech, Mrs. de Angeli gives a vivid account of other Quaker customs. One was the way the family observed a quiet period before each meal. Another was the description of a Meeting on the First Day. The boys and men sat on one side and women and girls on the other. Father, who was an elder, sat with the other elders on benches raised at the front and facing the congregation. There was silence for a long time. Finally, a woman in the back of the room began to speak about her concern for one in the meeting who had a secret sin. Hannah knew she must be the one. "How could the woman know about the sash?" She felt a wave of heat go over her, causing her to untie her bonnet and pull off her mitts. Finally, the woman stopped speaking. "After a few moments of silence Father leaned over and shook hands with Isaac Stokes. The Meeting was over."

⁴Hendrik Van Loon, *New York Herald Tribune Books*, November 15, 1936, p. 14.

The illustrations add much to the interest of the story. Many colored ones in sepia tones reveal Quaker faces of tenderness and serenity. The end-papers depict red sandstone houses along a Philadelphia street. A border of bleeding hearts make up the title page. Street vendors and their cries are effectively introduced and illustrated at the beginning of each chapter. There are the cries of the night watch, the oysterman, the pepper-pot woman, the seller of shad, whitewash man, umbrella vender, and seller of peaches. In pictures and text the author-artist has caught the full flavor of the time, place, and people.

Marguerite de Angeli went farther afield to the Gaspé Peninsula and selected a little French Canadian girl and her way of life as the subject for *Petite Suzanne*. The story centers around petite Suzanne, or Ti-Su for short, as her uncle called her. The author shows a warm feeling for these simple-hearted people, who were rather poor in this world's goods but rich in love and understanding.

Such everyday happenings as gathering wood in a dog cart, going to school, helping with the chores, rabbit hunting, and merry making when Ol' Batees, the village character, dropped in make up most of the story. However, there are some unusual experiences, such as Andre's spill into deep water, Suzanne's meeting with the tourist lady, and the high spot of the year, the Christmas celebration. The making of presents, getting the tree, attending Midnight Mass followed by the distribution of presents and *reveillon* (supper)—all give color and distinction to the story.

One point concerning the style might

be mentioned and that is the frequent change of verb tense. One critic³, however, considers this manner of telling the narrative proper in the past tense and describing the life which goes on much as it has for three centuries in the present as giving a special kind of vitality to the story. After all, this is a minor point in, otherwise, a well-written story.

At every possible place, illustrations bring out the story. The gay colored pictures—seven full-page ones—in cool blues, greens, violets, and reds, with touches of yellow are most satisfying to a child's love of beauty. One of the most expressive of movement and feeling is the double spread in cool blue and green, showing the people going to Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. The lines of the figures work rhythmically toward the warm spot of light at the door of the church. The end papers, like several others in Mrs. de Angeli's books, are pictorial maps of the community. *Petite Suzanne* shows artistry in both words and illustrations.

More closely connected with today than Marguerite de Angeli's earlier regional stories of Pennsylvania is *Up the Hill*. This richly human story of a Polish family living in a Pennsylvania mining town opens with a celebration of Christmas. Many picturesque details as to food, decorations, and customs make memorable reading. For instance, it was customary on arriving for one to say: "May He be praised!", and the reply was, "Forever and ever!" At the supper table on Christmas Eve they shared a Christmas wafer and made a wish, one with another.

³Ellen L. Buel, *New York Times Book Review*, November 14, 1937, p. 470.

The illustrations combine with the prose to present an attractive picture of Polish life in America. No reader could follow the story of this Polish family without a warm regard for them as lovable people and good citizens. While they may have unpronounceable names to us and somewhat different ways, in essentials we are alike. They love freedom, their homes, their families, and the aesthetic. They can be self-sacrificing, industrious, ambitious, and religious—traits vividly set forth in *Up the Hill*.

About half of the twenty full-page lithographs are in rich colors. One of the loveliest is that of Babcia (grandmother) feeding her geese, done in green, blue, brown, and pink. Mrs. de Angeli has caught the spirit in the movement of the geese and the grandmother's expression of kindness and pride in her possessions. The black-and-white pictures are just as expressive. The end papers picture a mining town with dark brown, snow-covered houses, lights shining from the windows on Christmas Eve and Aniela and Tadek, in gorgeous red and blue, gazing at a star in the distance over the church steeple. The title page shows Aniela in the costume which she wore on the day of the project at school. The dedicatory page has quaint heart-shaped decorations which give a foreign flavor. Truly, the illustrations and story are one.

Few writers for children have attacked the race question with more courage and sympathetic understanding than Marguerite de Angeli in *Bright April*. Yet its message of good citizenship and racial understanding is not obtrusive but really secondary to the story and the character of

lovable April Bright. *Bright April* gives insight into the everyday life, attitudes, and problems of this middle-class Negro family. April's activities are those of any normal nine-year-old. She goes to school, does chores, has pals, plays paper dolls, belongs to the Brownie Scouts, and goes on hikes and picnics. She has wise, intelligent parents, who help her make needed adjustments in times of racial tension. In the opening chapter, April and her mother are on a trolley car when a little white girl points her finger at April and says, "You're brown." April asked, "Am I Mamma?". Her mother replied, "Yes, of course. You are just the color of coffee with good cream in it" and squeezed April's hand.

April's first real knowledge of racial intolerance came at a Brownie meeting when the little girls who were sewing began to tell what they intended to be when they grew up. April said she thought she would be a hat designer and boss of a big store when one of the girls laughed and said, "You? Why they never let—". The Scout leader stopped the little girl and talked to April after the others left. Then April began to understand some things. Running home, she threw herself weeping at her mother's feet telling her about the awful feeling she had inside. "Why must we be different?" she begged. "I don't feel different." "You aren't different, really," Mamma comforted, "except in the way one flower differs from another." She drew April to the window and pointed out how pretty the dark tulips and purple hyacinths looked among the lighter ones. "Both are needed to make a beautiful bouquet. You're my dark April. Dark Bright April! You're a Brownie too. Isn't

that funny?" Soon April was quieted and trying on a new dress.

Among the most lasting impressions of the story is the feeling of security which the happy family life gives. Gay, carefree Tom, April's brother, was always beating on everything with his drumsticks. On weekends when her sister Chris, who was to be a nurse, came home, young people would come in, and April was allowed to stay up and watch them dance to the tune of Tom's drumsticks and the piano with her mother playing. Birthdays also were special occasions in the Bright household.

The story of *Bright April* shows compact structure, convincing characterization, careful selection of details and a feeling for words. Numerous examples of vivid description could be given.

As we have noted, the usual approach to regional literature is by way of present day fiction, interpreting the way of life of groups in certain localities. Another approach is by way of historical fiction, showing the contribution of Old World cultures to the American blend. Such is *Elin's Amerika*. Mrs. de Angeli in her Newbery acceptance speech⁶ mentions how it grew out of a conversation with Dr. Ralph Johnson of Girard College who because of his interest in her books about the plain people of Pennsylvania, told of his Swedish ancestors, who had come to Pennsylvania before it was Pennsylvania and settled along the Delaware.

The story centers around Elin, who was lonely for a playmate, since all the children in the New Sweden settlement but her, were boys. She displayed courage when she warned a group of women gath-

ered to make soap against an Indian attack. At home she shared in different pioneer activities and celebrations which dated back to the homeland. One of her fears was that the Tomte, the house elf, would leave and nothing would go well unless she minded her elders and did what was right.

The story is brought to a satisfactory conclusion by telling of the arrival of a boat bringing the long-awaited supplies and another little girl, so ardently desired by Elin. "She no longer needed to make believe to talk to the Tomte . . . She no longer needed to think of Old Sweden as 'home'. Home was here! Here in the new land. This was Elin's Amerika."

This book is a story of fortitude and courage and a timely reminder of the contribution which Swedish pioneers made to our America. While it does not have as much plot as some others of Mrs. de Angeli's books, what it lacks in conflict and suspense, it makes up in significance of the whole story and beauty of illustrations. The soft, deep toned pictures, eleven full-page ones in water colors and the pencil drawings, are as lovely as any Marguerite de Angeli has done. The end papers consist of a pictorial map of New Sweden about 1648. The title page shows the cherubim carved over the altar in their church, which all the settlers had helped build. The decorated letters with the Tomte in different poses make cunning chapter headings.

In *Jared's Island*, Mrs. De Angeli turned to a period in our history, about 1760, when the lure of the sea was strong and many sailors centered their thoughts on piracy and buried treasure. *Jared's Island* is the story of a young Scotch boy,

⁶De Angeli, *op. cit.*, 255.

Jared Craig, who was wrecked off the coast of New Jersey and rescued by Abner Lippincott, a young fisherman, in whose home near Tom's River, Jared lived for a time. This is definitely a boy's book. Running away, living with the Indians, exploring the island and looking for buried treasure are the stuff of which most boys dream. True to boy life, Jared despised the girls' work—washing dishes, making beds, churning—which he was set to do. Rather than do such chores and go to school, he ran away. However, his desire for love and the friendly shelter of a home led him back to Jenny and Abner.

The misty-like black-and-white pictures lend atmosphere and are particularly appropriate to a story about life near the sea. There is only one colored illustration, and that of Jared, which is placed opposite the title page. The end papers give a pictorial map of Barnegat Bay and the New Jersey coastline.

As we have already mentioned, *Copper-Toed Boots* grew out of stories Mrs. de Angeli heard her father tell of his boyhood. She dedicated it to her father, Shad Lofft, and to Ash Tomlinson, his boyhood friend—the chief characters in the story. Not only has the author captured the spirit and tradition of village life back in the 1870's but the essence of boyhood. Shad was a typical boy in every respect. Boys have fun trading and swap any and everything. Shad traded four horse-shoe nails for the loan of Ash's knife, and the squirrel skin, for which he had given Ash a glassy marble for his half interest, he traded to Stevie Lockwood for a Jew's-harp. Boys like to slip off in the spring and go swimming before parents think the

weather warm enough. A group of boys including Shad and Ash went for a swim. When Shad and Ash came out shivering, they found their shirts and flannels tied in knots—how Shad detested those flannels anyway!

Most older brothers try to boss a younger brother and report his misdeeds to their parents, or at least hold it over the younger. When Shad and Ash were sent home from school for putting the calf in the school belfry and tying its tail to the bell rope, Will, two years older, whispered that evening, "Yaah! Got sent home, didn't you? Yaah! Smarty!" Shad did not answer but just scowled. When they went to bed, they had their usual arguments over who was taking up most room.

An inspiring, poetic tale is *The Door in the Wall*, winner of the Newbery Award for 1950. This is Mrs. de Angeli's first book in which she turned from an American setting to Medieval England in the time of Edward the Third. Robin de Bureford, whose father had gone off to war and mother to attend the Queen, was to be taken to Sir Peter de Lindsay's to be a page. As the servants had all fled in fear of the plague and Robin had been seized with a malady that left him unable to walk, Brother Luke, a wandering friar befriended Robin and with the help of John-go-in-the-Wynd, a minstrel, took Robin to Lindsay Hall. The good friar encouraged Robin to use his hands to carve, to write, to practice patience and subdue his quick temper. Also, he rubbed Robin's legs and taught him to swim so that his arms would grow stronger and help him get about on crutches. "Remember even thy crutches can be a door in the wall," he

would tell Robin. John, the minstrel, taught Robin to play a Saxon harp and finally carve one of his own.

Robin is an inspiring character who triumphed over physical handicaps. Such a heroic figure appeals particularly to handicapped children. Fears beset Robin as to what his father and mother would do when they learned that he was a cripple and could not fulfill his knightly duties. He dreaded his arrival at Lindsay Hall. "What sort of welcome would he have limping as he was on crutches?" But he need not have been afraid, for he received a warm welcome. When his mother and father arrived in company with the King, "Nothing was said of crutches or of misshapen legs, or of ill fortune." They warmly embraced Robin, and the King in recognition of his bravery in saving the Castle from the Welsh besiegers bestowed a jeweled-collar upon him. In spite of extreme handicaps, he found the door in the wall.

Her illustrations are just as colorful and faithfully drawn. The end papers picture a castle and its surroundings. The title page shows Robin looking at a barred castle door followed by another picture of an open door with a landscape in the distance. There are twelve full-page pictures and one double spread, some in lavish colors, rich reds and royal purples, as well as many black-and-white ones. Truly, *The Door in the Wall* deserves all the recognition and honor which it has brought its author.

The latest book by Marguerite de Angeli, *Just Like David*, adds little to her stature as a writer. It lacks the creative artistry of *Henners's Lydia*, *Skipjack*

School, *Thee, Hannah!* or *The Door in the Wall*. The author seems too intent on teaching. The narrative is without plot. In the beginning, the family is leaving Hatboro, Pennsylvania to go to a new home near Cincinnati, Ohio. The story tells of their packing, saying goodbye, the long drive over the Pennsylvania Turnpike to Ohio, during which the children ask questions and learn many facts, the arrival at their new home and exploring its possibilities. Jeffrey, age five-and-a-half, aspires to be just like David, seven—to go to school and learn to read, to be boss in games, and to lose his front tooth. Part of these he achieves in the conclusion.

The book seems designed as easy reading for the early grades and abounds in factual details and natural dialogue. David, Jeffrey, and Henry are depicted as real, lovable children. The type is large, binding durable, and drawings are mainly in black-and-white with only two colored ones.

Marguerite de Angeli's creative work has grown steadily. In addition to writing and illustrating these fifteen books, which we have discussed, she has illustrated for several magazines and various publishers. Her books, whether they are concerned with the so-called minority groups or historical fiction, combine an instinctive understanding and respect for children and a warm feeling for the enduring qualities of family relationships with her ability to tell an absorbing story and eye-filling pictures that delight old and young. Because Marguerite de Angeli opened the door and entered, the realm of children's books has been immeasurably enriched.

(Continued on Page 358)

No Tune From the Hickory Stick

CHUCK REASONER¹

"Oh NO, Mr. Reasoner! Not POETRY!"

This is the comment I would have received, either verbally or in the thinking of my sixth graders had I breezed into the classroom one morning, heavily laden with folders of plans and materials and said, "Come on, kids—let's write some poems!"

And yet, these forty students needed some poetry experience. Their backgrounds consisted of a few nursery rhymes and a couple of "cultural musts" that they had memorized. To them, a poem was a bunch of words that rhymed every line or so and many of them believed that poems were written, read, and enjoyed solely by "old" people. I knew that somehow I had to stimulate an interest and create an atmosphere where this new kind of creative writing could take root and grow. I knew, too, that somewhere there were values and enjoyments in poetry that they each could share if I could only show them the direction in which to travel.

*I dug through the files in the back of my mind—keeping only the word "interest" foremost in my thoughts. Poems about animals? Nature? Holidays? People? No, I couldn't begin there! But wait, kids like stories! Stories with action, suspense, and excitement! I wondered if there were any stories about poetry. And so my reasoning went until I connected poetry and song lyrics together. My worry was nearly over. A little research on Francis Scott Key's immortal *Defence of Fort McHenry* and I was able to write an interesting story which kept the group spellbound until I told them the author and the first line of the poem.

"But that's not a poem!" they shouted back at me. "That's the *Star Spangled Banner*!"

"The book I have says it's called *The Defense of Fort McHenry*," I insisted as the argument persisted and I became worried about being thrown out on my recently acquired courage. But Donna Lee came to my rescue. "Couldn't it be both?" she inquired. And I agreed that it not only could, but was!

After talking about the poem and how it became our National Anthem, we talked about the "poetry" of other songs. Here I missed the boat; and I didn't realize it until a week later. This group consisted of forty of the singiest youngsters one can imagine ever assembled. But we didn't sing—then. Interest, fortunately, wasn't lost and we discussed the differences in prose and poetry. We agreed, in general, that the major differences were in rhyme (although not necessary) and structure—that is, the way it appears on the printed page. This was a good start. And it finally led to the next discussion concerning their own personal familiarity with poems and with poets.

"Does anyone here know a poem he could tell us?" I inquired and a host of hands went into the air. Everyone that wanted to shared his rhyme with the group. "What about the people who write poems, the poets? Do you know the names of any?" I asked, probing further. Poe, Kilmer, Scott, Tennyson, Browning, and Longfellow were only a few of the ones mentioned.

"It's nice," I said, "that we have those famous people to write our poems for us—or there wouldn't be any! I sometimes wish I could be a famous poet for a while so I could write poetry."

"But you don't have to be a famous person to write a poem," Ronald said, "I've written poems myself!"

¹Mr. Reasoner was a Senior in the College of Education of the Ohio State University last year.

"But those weren't *real* poems," I argued, realizing the dangerous psychology I was using.

"They're poems!" he said definantly as Dee interrupted.

"I've written some poems too!"

"Now wait a minute," I inserted as everyone was nodding 'me too!' "Are you telling me that *you* can write *poetry*? That *anyone* can write *poetry*?"

"Sure we can!" they cried. "We've done it!" others added.

"But what could you write a poem about?" I questioned further. And we talked of the various subjects about which poetry was written—coming to the conclusion that poetry is written about *everything*.

"You know, maybe I was wrong," I said thoughtfully. "Maybe we *can* write poetry. I'll try to write one and bring it with me next Monday."

"Can we try too?" Jackie asked.

"How many of you think you can?" I challenged and not a single hand remained down. "All right," I agreed thoroughly persuaded, "let's try!"

"Dee's got one that she just wrote," Kenny exclaimed. "But she won't read it!"

"Dee," I approached cautiously, "would you mind if I read it to the class?" She said she wouldn't mind and the whole group was thrilled as I read Dee Dailey's *Snow* to them. You see, it had started to snow for the first time this year and everything was white outside.

**I had called the Educational Library and asked that fifteen to twenty books containing poems on a sixth grade level be sent to the school as soon as possible. The books had arrived in a big box that morning although I had not been in the room at the time. They were placed on the table by the door; but the box was empty when I came into the room and I wasn't aware of what its contents had been until that afternoon when once again we turned to poetry.

Before the bell rang, I put three of the students' poems on the chalkboard. All

three were good poems but were written in sentence form. After attendance had been checked, I read the poems twice. The first time as their sentence structure and punctuation told me to do, and the second time as I thought it should be. We discussed the differences, deciding that it could be read easier and with more meaning if the "thought sentences" were put in some other order rather than in paragraphs and sentences. "Would anyone like to try to fix these?" I asked and three brave pupils came forth. As they erased and rewrote, other members of the group voiced their help and suggestions. Everyone finally approved of the finished products and I passed back their own poems to be reorganized—commenting that word change wasn't necessary in most cases.

There were spelling, punctuation, and structural errors on all of the papers, some more than others, and everyone was kept busy while I offered my assistance to those who were still confused. We corrected the spelling and the punctuation, (I called their attention to the errors by placing a little red check on their papers where they occurred), but I did not want to bring a big study of language mechanics into the creative writing period.

Creativity in the elementary classrooms of today's schools is often blocked by the importance put on mechanics, rules, or fundamentals. Evidences can easily be found, for example, during the art period when a child is criticized for painting a purple tree or an ill proportioned animal. Free, uninhibited, creative writing is likewise stalled if teachers still insist on receiving letter-perfect papers, which they seldom get anyway, from their students regardless of originality or creativeness. Grades are still handed out according to commas omitted, words misspelled, or to the misuse of one of the tenses of the verb. This is important, to be sure, but teachers of the language arts should realize that the child's process of writing creatively

closely parallels the methods we all use. We scribble hurried notes or sentences, construct awkward paragraphs, mis-spell words, and omit punctuation in order to get our ideas down on paper while they are fresh in our minds. Then we set to work revising, cutting, correcting, and rewording. Why should we then expect our students to write their first drafts letter perfect? The mechanics or skills period can come at a later time!

I did not want to allow even the slightest block to appear which might make the children recoil from expressing themselves through poetry and exploring larger fields. If they couldn't see their mistakes, I told them.

We didn't spend too much time in this work period, but while they were occupied, I did have time to put Dorothy Aldis' *Everybody Says* on the chalk board. Then I asked them to "doubleup" in the seats on the far side of the room facing the board. They were glad to do this and we quickly had a compact little group for some choral reading. "Let's try to read this poem together," I asked and they began:

"Everybody says I look just like my mother, Everybody says tha. . . ."

"Who says?" I questioned, desiring more expression in the word 'everybody.' They repeated it over and over until I felt the emphasis was good and we began again. I stopped them again on the words 'mother,' 'Aunt Bee,' 'nose,' and 'father's'—and then we worked on the last line: 'But I want to look like me.' They were getting the idea. We next took different sections of the group for special lines, and had Jimmy Johnstone do the last line as a solo. Jackie Beer soloed the last line too and I think we could have stayed with the poem for an hour! Everyone wanted a chance to do the last line; but instead I suggested Hickory, Dickory, Dock.

"That's for first graders," someone said disgustedly while the rest thought it.

"Yes, the poem is for younger children," I agreed, "but I just wanted to see if you could do something with the poem that

I'm sure the first graders here can't do." After they asked me what I wanted them to do, I knew I was back on allied territory again. "Let's try this group here as the clock," I suggested, marking off a group to my left. "Let's see, what sound does a clock make?"

They came out with loud clucking noises using their tongues and sucking in through their teeth. "But at one o'clock in the morning," I pointed out, "wouldn't it be making a different noise?" Several of them started uttering 'tic-toc' very quietly and I asked them to demonstrate to the rest of the group. This done, we began on the poem—emphasizing different words as we had done before and always listening for the clock's tic-toc in the background. They liked this new experience too, and we had to do it over and over until everyone had had a chance at being the clock.

"When we say poems like this, it almost sounds like a song!" Kaylin Woods exclaimed, and I agreed that it actually did sound like a beautiful song from an audience point of view.

"Let's sing!" Harold shouted and there was no avoiding it this time. I suddenly realized the chance I had missed during my first week's experience in this new project and, at their request, we sang three "rounds": *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*; *Oh How Lovely Is the Evening*; and *Three Blind Mice*. They loved to sing!

"Our time is nearly up," I said, "but before the bell rings I'd like to tell you that I just couldn't find a football poem anywhere!" I smiled at them and finished, "That's why we did some choral reading and some singing today. I had promised to find a football poem or else bring you some more poems like I read to you the last time. I thought that what we did today might make up for the football poem I couldn't find."

"I found one in one of the books you brought us," Ronald interrupted. The books I brought? Oh, *then* they *did* come! The library had sent them on time! But where were they?

"What's the name of it, Ronald?" I

asked, allowing my face to assume its natural color.

"*On the Gridiron*," he said and I asked him to read it to the class.

"Of all the insolent, insubordinate young scamps," I thought to myself as he was reading. "Taking those books without my telling him he could! The rest of them too—they were in on it! And how embarrassing! Ronald found a poem by Roger Hastings that I'd searched for hours to find. Disrespect! Disobedience! How shall they pay—?"

"I found a poem I like real well," Virginina pointed out after Ronald had finished reading—holding the book she had selected from the box high in the air.

"I've got one about frogs," Irene said as fourteen others began reaching into their secret-compartment-desks for the books they had chosen.

Is there no end? It's mutiny—it's—! But wait a minute, Mr. Reasoner! You left no specific orders that they weren't to touch the books. You hadn't told Ronald that he couldn't try to find a football poem too! No one has broken any laws but you! You're to blame—you didn't tell them *what* to do; but they went right ahead anyway. Doesn't this experience show you something? They haven't suspected your embarrassment. You've kept your promise, and, after all—has any real harm been done?

Something was coming back to me about individuals, self-direction, and needs but I was too involved to think about it now. I just hadn't realized, to the fullest extent, the real interest I had created. I had lit a fire a week ago, and it was still burning. In fact, the flames were thirsting for more fuel and, satisfied, they were growing larger and larger. The class wanted more poems, they wanted to write more, to read more, to hear more, and to speak more poems. Was this not my purpose for bringing this study into the classroom in the first place? Of course it was! I had just under estimated them, that's all. ***By this time most of the eager students had thoroughly scanned the poetry books I had sent to the school and they

had chosen a poem or several that they liked best and wanted to share them with the others of the class. The rest were waiting for their turns at the books.

After everyone had read his selection orally, I wanted to prepare them for an even greater experience by injecting some of the Christmas spirit into their creative writing. But first of all the stage had to be set. I thought that the verses on Christmas cards might be a good place to begin, for if I created enough interest, perhaps they would want to write their own verses to be put on self-designed cards—thus integrating the art and the language periods. I seized an opportune moment to say to them, "A lot of people say that they hate poetry—that they wouldn't read a single poem no matter if their lives depended upon it. But I'd be willing to bet that these very people who say that read many poems during the course of a year. Probably some of them read as high as fifty or one hundred poems a year. We haven't talked about this kind of poem yet, but I wonder if you can guess what kind it is?"

They guessed songs, stories in poem form, proverbs, and nursery rhymes; but couldn't follow up my clues. So I added: "They are poems especially read at this time of year, pertaining to the holidays."

"Thanksgiving poems!" one said.

"Christmas cards!" Vicki guessed correctly.

"Not only Christmas card greetings," I added, "but all kinds of greetings. What other kinds of greeting cards have you read besides Christmas cards?" The answers came back quickly: Birthdays, New Years, 'Babies Born,' Valentines, Deaths, and Easter.

"Do you suppose we could try to write some Christmas greetings?" I asked, hoping that we could begin a small project here—or even a unit on Christmas or the holidays.

That's how it was all planned anyway. A study of Christmas in present-day America, in early America, in foreign countries, the telling and reading of Christmas stories, the singing of the holi-

days' songs, designing and drawing and printing Christmas cards, dramatizing scenes or plays of Christmas time, a study of the symbolism of the flowers of Christmas and the Christmas tree, and finally, the writing of verses for self-designed and self-made Christmas cards which were to be duplicated for the whole class on the duplicating machine. I thought this a wonderful plan of experience for them. I was guiding them carefully—I didn't want to tell them they *had* to do it—I wanted them to choose for themselves. They did! But it wasn't about Christmas!

Either Christmas was too far away or else it was less appealing to them than were these twenty poetry books I had sent to Ninth Avenue School. Anyway, Tommy Bowers said, as if he hadn't paid any attention to what I'd suggested a few minutes before, "Why don't we write our own poetry book?"

This made me very unhappy! I was trapped again. There's a saying somewhere about the best laid plans... but I listened to Phyllis as she picked up Tommy's cue.

"We could copy some poems we liked best from books!"

"Some about football, too."

"We could draw our own pictures!"

"And divide it into people, places, and things... and—"

I couldn't keep up! I had been attacking the wrong front. They had quickly decided to do a room anthology and I found myself suddenly placed in a guiding and helping position.

They wouldn't take no for an answer and I certainly didn't want to say "no!" Somewhere along the line I had achieved a most commendable goal. That of pupil planning. Teacher-pupil planning, if you want, although at the time I felt very much let out of the whole thing. I seemed to be forced into it; but I was proud, when I realized later that had I not produced the

permissive atmosphere I did, the results might not have been quite so gratifying. Oh, we'd probably have done the Christmas—but they didn't want to spend their time on such a small thing as verse writing when they could write a whole book of poems!

We soon discovered it necessary to talk about the job to be done and the committees needed to do these jobs. And the period progressed nearly thirty minutes after the dismissal bell that day in doing nothing else but planning broad areas of work.

I went home that night fully aware of the hectic but priceless day I had spent at Ninth Avenue School. I took the brand new file folder, full and bulging, labeled: "Project for Christmas," from the file; put a big red 'X' on it; and returned it to its proper place. I then took another unused manila folder from my desk drawer, and with my pen, labeled it "Poetry." There was a lot to do now and I had to get busy.

In this short period of time I learned a lot about teaching. I learned that a teacher may fail when he deviates from traditional patterns of educating youngsters because the children's imaginations may go on the rampage. A teacher may throw up his hands in disgust and regress to the formal atmosphere of his own childhood experiences in home and school. A teacher may try to go along with the experiment—living a hectic and frustrated professional life. Or he may attempt to inform himself of the different ideas and methods of teaching that "pay off" in creative teaching.

Teachers realize, of course, that what Miss Smith did in her classroom at the East Side School or what I did at Ninth Avenue School cannot be duplicated by them in their own classrooms. And the reason is not only that the schools are different or that the teachers are different!

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Creative Writing Must Be Motivated

HERBERT J. FARRIS¹

On my first day of classroom teaching I handed out paper to each of the children, and blithely asked them to write the experience that had been most fun for them during the summer. Immediately, to my dismay, a storm of dissent echoed and reverberated throughout the room.

"I didn't have any fun," one of the boys yelled.

"I don't know what to write," piped a girl.

"Why do we have to do this?" came from a corner of the room.

Gradually the tempest wore itself out, and the class grumblingly went to work. The results were anything but satisfactory: half the pupils wrote little of nothing; the others completed uninspired paragraphs that were obviously not up to the ability of fifth and sixth graders. Yet this was not even creative writing: it was no more than simple reporting of facts and events. The fault, of course, was mine, but I had learned my first lesson on motivation in creative writing—the hard way.

Creative writing is difficult work. The majority of children will not attempt it unless there is an inducement, and the inducement must be teacher-inspired. Some instructors will raise the inevitable question: "Why bother with creative writing?" The answers should be fairly obvious. Youngsters need to be able to express themselves through this medium just as they do through the other arts. Often, too, a child's fears and hopes and ambitions

will evidence themselves through the aid of creative writing. Finally, it gives the teacher the basis for better meeting the children's needs in the language arts by diagnosis of individual papers. The outstanding faults in composition, punctuation and grammar can then be incorporated in the daily language work.

Before outlining a few techniques in motivating a creative writing program, it might be well to list some "do's" and "don'ts" which should be considered by the teacher contemplating the beginning of such a project.

1. Don't kill interest by having the children write creatively too often.

2. Don't set up barriers and rules. Creative writing should be free and un-governed by regulations.

3. Don't correct the children's papers. Filling the youngster's pages full of red penciled corrections is one of the quickest ways to defeat, frustrate and ultimately kill the desire to create. Diagnosed needs in grammar and punctuation may be taken up during the regular language period.

1. Do praise the children's work.

2. Do give tactful suggestions as to how the writing can be bettered.

3. Do plan and vary the motivation carefully, for to be successful, several interesting and challenging types of incentive are necessary.

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There are many techniques for motivating creative writing, but there are three which I have used most effectively in the classroom. None is original, but the enterprising teacher can devise original variations to these processes, and perhaps be inspired to invent new techniques of his own.

Intermediate grade children love games. One way, then, to motivate creative writing is to appeal to this interest, and there are many easy creative writing games which can be used. One of the simplest of these games is started by the teacher writing several descriptive phrases on the board—six to eight is best—and then asking the pupils of what they are reminded. If the phrases are perhaps: "rugged lineman, broken-field runner, jump pass, substitute quarterback, T-formation, opening kickoff", the children will, of course, say "football." After this the remainder of the technique is obvious: the teacher asks whether they could write a story about football using these phrases. The results are usually excellent.

Another fine method of motivation consists of the teacher selecting a short story, reading all but the conclusion, and then asking the children if they can finish it. Often the results are amazing. The youngsters write vivid, imaginative endings, especially when absolutely free latitude is allowed them in their writing. They may want the ending sad, comic or happy. The teacher must not stifle or obstruct their wishes. Again, the children's enjoyment of games comes into play, for they may read aloud endings their classmates have written, with all the class trying to guess the author. At the end the in-

structor should read the conclusion of the story.

A variation on this technique is the teacher-told story. Here the teacher simply tells part of a story, reaches a climax, and lets the youngsters finish it. It is easy to correlate the social studies unit with this process. Either a story can be found relating to the unit, or the teacher can construct one. Often the children will engage in research to complete a story. Learning is taking place along with the feeling of success in creation.

Finally, a full time, workable creative writing program can be set up in the classroom through the device of the Story Box. The organization of this program is quite simple. A cardboard box with a slit in the top, painted with tempera, and labeled Our Story Box is placed in the classroom. There need be no mention made of it, for the children will soon see it and become curious. The teacher can then say in an off-hand manner that the box is placed there in case anyone who writes a story or poem wants to put it in and read it in front of the class during Friday's story period. Soon there will be signs of activity, and when Friday arrives an "opener" may be appointed to open the box, pick out the story, and have the author come forward to read it. Ever since its inception over a year ago the Story Box in our room has never been empty. Youngsters love the mystery and suspense connected with the opening which always should be made an important event. They learn to appreciate the efforts of their peers, and to understand the hard work which goes into a piece of creative writing.

Initiating a creative writing program

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Encouraging the Growth of Vocabulary

THOMAS SCHOTTMAN¹

"You know, it's funny, but I keep hearing our vocabulary words on the television programs." "Milton Berle called this fellow 'obnoxious' last night." "They must have been using our words all the time." Such comments by pupils indicate an awareness of vocabulary. They can lead to the knowledge that until one knows all the words a person is using, one can't fully understand what he is saying. This awareness and an aggressive demand for the meanings of words is the unmeasurable, and yet the most important goal of a vocabulary program. It cannot be achieved merely by practice in word identification skills, although this is an essential part of a program. The training in skills must be accompanied by an atmosphere which actively encourages the children to appreciate the importance and satisfaction of a large and meaningful vocabulary.

A vocabulary program in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades requires such a two pronged approach. The writer works with sixth grade groups, but the approach is directly applicable to fourth and fifth grade groups which also face the same problem of a rapidly increasing vocabulary load. The fact that this new vocabulary abounds in abstract and unfamiliar meanings adds to the difficulty of the problem. As McKee says of this period,

In addition to supplying varied material to satisfy the pupils' rapidly expanding reading interests, definite instruction should be provided in using those tools by means of which he can become independent in arriving at an adequate understanding of what he reads and in thinking critically about what he has read.²

Studies have shown that such a direct approach to the teaching of vocabulary is superior to the indirect method of teaching vocabulary. It is necessary to develop a program of independent word analysis.

The skills which the writer teaches in such a program involves phonics, use of context, structural analysis (base words, prefixes and suffixes), and the dictionary. If the group has had an adequate background of phonics in the lower grades this part of the program can be minimized and the greatest emphasis put on the other parts. Direct lessons in how to use these skills should be given and then the skills should be utilized in all their school work, social studies, science, health, English and spelling, as well as their work with the basic reader.

But this is not enough. It is the skeleton of the program, and skeletons are notoriously unattractive. The first and essential step is to interest the boys and girls in the significance of words, to make them word-conscious, and to provide an atmosphere in which they can develop concepts for the many strange symbols (words) they meet in their reading. Research has indicated that it is such an environment that leads to vocabulary growth. Such research stresses the fact that our experience determines our understanding of a given symbol, and that therefore years of experience separate the concepts of teachers

¹Cortland, New York, Public Schools.

²Paul McKee, *The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School*, Chapters 10 and 11, New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948.

and children, even concepts which we feel we have in common, such as "mother," "war," etc. Therefore, it is imperative that the classroom be a place of meaningful activities which will allow the growth of concepts and thus vocabularies.

One of the best means of developing concepts is through field trips. In our study of food we visit a bakery and such terms as "machine" and "mass-production" take on new meanings, especially for groups of country boys and girls. Before our visit many find it difficult to comprehend that it is the machines that mix the dough, weigh it, cut the bread and wrap it—all without mishap! "Ingredients" and "enriched bread" become symbols with meaning after our visit.

Another example is the field trips we take in our study of conservation. "Reforestation," "contour plowing," "erosion," and "alternate branching" become part of the pupils' speaking vocabulary after our trips to local farms and a state park as well as many walks around the school.

Another means of creating word consciousness and of developing concepts of words is through creative writing. Many authorities express the opinion that there is a very close relationship between all the language arts, and that by encouraging clear and creative writing in pupils we increase their ability to recognize and appreciate the efforts of other writers. Children like to write. They love to write tall tales, Halloween stories, stories of Christmas, or of a big storm, especially when these are read aloud or put in a "collection of short stories." Abler students are often successful in writing their own plays based on the material they have learned in social studies

or read in a library book or a basic reader. It is great fun to record such plays on a tape recorder. Another device worthy of mention is that of allowing boys and girls to clip a picture from a magazine, and then to write a story based on the picture. They pick a picture that interests them and then they give their imagination full sway. Book reports on library reading can also be meaningful if the reports are put to a purpose. They can be arranged in folders according to authors so that they are a guide to other pupils in the selection of a book. (They are also a great guide to the teacher!)

Another aspect of creative writing which the writer finds appeals to boys and girls is poetry. Poetry has been described as "painting pictures with words." Children soon come to appreciate this aspect of poetry if they are introduced to it in a free and enjoyable atmosphere. The writer enjoys many poems with his classes. They are not read in an English period, but here and there throughout the day. They may be poems of the season, or a particularly descriptive poem, a ridiculous poem, or a poem a child finds in a book of poems or a magazine. They are eager to share their enjoyment with the other children. Children can write poems. They can be poems of Christmas, and poems of winter and spring after walks during which the children observe the signs of these seasons. The children are quick to recognize and appreciate the particularly apt use of words in their fellow classmates' poems.

All creative writing, and some factual writing, gives children a chance to use their new vocabulary. In their attempts to express themselves they desire the help

of words, and if the class or the teacher commends the appropriate use of a word, writing becomes an even more interesting occupation.

Teachers usually find it necessary to select certain important words for more detailed study. This allows pupils to arrive at a clear and accurate meaning of the word, and facilitates future recognition of the word. Such an effort not only encourages greater concentration on words, but it provides tangible proof to the child that his vocabulary is growing and it makes it possible for him to transfer the new words to his speaking and writing.

One method of organizing this growth of a specific vocabulary is by keeping a vocabulary notebook. The writer used the following type of organization and found it effective. It served its purpose of stressing certain words and making the children aware of them so that they heard them often and thereby added new meanings to the words.

The majority of the words in the notebook were from a basic reader, but new words from the content subjects were included.

1. During the reading of a story each child jots down unfamiliar words and the page on which it appeared. Pupils should be encouraged to write a brief definition as derived from the context, but this is not essential.
2. When he has finished reading the pupil should look up as many words as time permits. (Usually two to five words are looked up.) He may then put his new words on a list on the board.
3. During the discussion, and perhaps

oral reading, some of the new words are discussed. Then the teacher and class go quickly over the new words on the board, and decide on two, three or four to add to their "Class Word List." Other words which a pupil has looked up or plans to look up, are added to "My Word List." This allows for individual differences.

4. The words listed in the "Class Word List" are followed by a brief meaning and a brief sentence using the word. (This is done as a homework or study assignment.)

5. These words are used in games and reviewed frequently. One game is called "Use a Word and Win a Prize." The teacher or a pupil would put a short list of words on the board and next to each put a small prize, a caramel or stick of gum. The pupil who used the word naturally in any of our class discussions won the prize next to the word. Another very enjoyable game is one in which a child acts out the word in pantomime and his classmates guess the meaning.

6. Completion type quizzes are given on these words.

A meaningful vocabulary and the ability to build that vocabulary through word recognition skills is of prime importance to every boy and girl. Research has shown some ways in which their needs can be met. Instruction in word recognition skills must be direct, not indirect. There must be a plan which covers the various aspects of a program in developing independence in word recognition, and which allows for the development of a meaningful vocabulary by providing as many meaningful experiences as possible.

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"De-Emphasizing" Differences in Reading Performance

GWENDOLYN G. McMICKLE¹

Too often within the course of the first grade a child becomes labeled as to his reading ability because he is always placed in the same reading group. He may read with the "good readers" or the "non-readers." Soon both he and his classmates come to accept his reading group label as an adequate measure of his reading ability.

If we are concerned about Johnny who is always called a "poor reader," how can we eliminate that label so that John can progress at his own rate without feeling he is a failure?

Providing children with varied reading experiences within many different groupings of children can help to prevent them from becoming labeled as to reading ability in the minds of their peers.

Many Different Groupings for Reading

This year in my first grade I have tried to provide opportunities for children to read in groups without being labeled for it. Our groupings have been mainly of three different types: the whole group, the ability groups, the interest groups.

Reading With The Whole Group

Reading experiences with the whole group help to build group feeling and develop experiences common to the group.

Large group reading experiences were a functional part of our living together with ease in the classroom. We planned our day's work, shared books, magazines, and news with each other. We wrote

down, to save and read, some of the interesting things that we experienced together. These reading opportunities, because of the frequent repetition involved or the closeness of the actual experience, gave every child a chance to read satisfactorily to the group.

Reading in Ability Groups

Part of our reading has been done within the framework of the ability group. If kept flexible, this group helps to speed the reading progress of many children. Also, it contributes toward economy of time in teaching because prepared materials can be used.

Ability groups were formed on the basis of readiness for reading which was determined for each child by teacher observation with the help of a standardized reading readiness test. Our class was at first divided into three groups, but later we found five groups fit our needs more closely.

Ability groupings, by their very existence, tend to promote the ability labeling we are trying to prevent. How could we retain this grouping and yet prevent Suzy from feeling superior because she read with the "high group," or Johnny from feeling inferior because his immaturity placed him in the "low group"?

First, we decided to use a different basic reading series with each reading

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group. The various groups read from the Scott, Foresman, Basic Series (two editions), and from the reading series of Ginn and Company, MacMillan, and Row, Peterson. This accomplished two things: We had much more interest within each group because they were reading fresh materials, and a consciousness of "reading book level" did not develop between groups. The children did not feel they were a "book ahead" or a "book behind" another group.

Another aspect of flexibility developed very naturally from the use of many reading series. Each reading series became attractive to every other group. Thus we began to have many requests from children to read with different groups so that they could enjoy more stories than just those of their own group. Immature Kenny and John asked to read with the most mature group of readers. Lloyd, Gayle, Jimmy, quite mature first graders, often liked to read with the group working on reading readiness materials. To deny the opportunity to read with other groups would have begun to promote ability distinctions, so we set up a provision in our room that each child would read with his own group and then with any other group he desired to join.

Reading With Interest Groups

Part of our reading this year has been done with interest groups. The purpose here was to bring together, in a small group, children of various abilities and maturities who had similar interests.

The interest groups were organized in this manner: The whole group would decide on the topics we needed to know

more about. Small groups were then formed to find out specific information. The individual child chose his group according to his interest. He read with that group until the purpose of the group was accomplished.

The materials used by the interest groups were mainly teacher-pupil developed materials. For example, sometimes our groups were organized around the various aspects of planning and having a party. Our reading materials then were the plans we wrote to organize and evaluate our party. In another instance, we wanted information about the farm. We used books, pictures, and ideas from each member of the group to write our stories. Thus, the reading activities of the interest groups were the sharing of experiences, writing stories based on these experiences, and evaluating these stories.

Has Ability Labeling Been Prevented?

In our first grade this year we have tried to provide many, varied reading experiences with many different groupings of children. Has this program helped to prevent the labeling of "good reader" or "poor reader"?

I feel that we have to a large extent prevented the labeling of reading ability that a child so often acquires in first grade and seldom loses throughout his elementary school years.

In support of this program are the following indications of attitudes and conditions within the group which have not been evidenced in my first grades in other years.

- (1.) No child associated himself or others as reading with a particu-

lar group all the time. Thus it was difficult for him to become identified with a defined degree of reading ability. Interestingly, the question of reading group level never came up among the children; it came, however, from the parents. Nancy's mother, Gary's mother, Joan's mother Ruthie's mother, and others came to me with worried expressions of "What reading group is my child in? Is he in the "low" group or the "high" group? I've asked him but he says he doesn't know what group he is in." Since the children had no basis for comparing reading levels with each other, they weren't concerned about it.

- (2.) Each child has found the reading material of other groups attractive to him. There has been no evidence of disdain for the books another child or group was reading. Thus, Gayle, Bob, Lloyd, Don, mature readers, delighted in reading with the less mature groups and vice versa.
- (3.) There was a lack of feeling of superiority on the part of the more mature readers. Gayle, Lloyd, and Don often joined a less mature group in which they would frequently make remarks like: "That was good, Kenny," or "Johnny is doing a good job, isn't he?" This was partly because no child was denied the

chance to read with any other group he desired. Instead of feelings of superiority or inferiority we have had much more evidence of tolerance, not only with regard to reading but throughout our whole program. The children have been alert to praise another child who shows even slight improvement.

- (4.) Each child found some reading at which he could achieve success in the eyes of his peers. Immature Kenny and Terry could help us read to evaluate our daily plans because of the frequent repetition in this situation. Also, these children could read satisfactorily the stories developed within the interest group because they often were derived from actual experience.

In discussing the success of this program, it would be wrong to indicate that children are unaware of differences in reading ability. They know that some children could read difficult stories while others read very little. It just didn't matter to the children in our first grade. No one was concerned about the differences; they simply accepted them.

Perhaps it is too optimistic to believe that many and varied groupings for reading can prevent labeling of ability. However, because the pressure and stigma usually involved have been so negligible this year, I do feel that labeling of ability has been greatly reduced.

A Year With Dick: Child Development and the Library

RUTH L. WALKER¹

There he sat—with the group, but not of it—except, perhaps, as something of his sulkiness crept outside him and seeped through the atmosphere of the library story hour.

On the surface there were all the attributes of a healthy, lively, intelligent, capable nine-year-old. He was sturdily built and rugged. Intellectually, he had good average mental ability, scoring 99 in an intelligence test. Potentially, he seemed to have all the abilities for learning to read, or for learning anything he really needed to know to get along in the world.

Academically, he was at least three years below grade level for the average child of his age. He found even the simplest pre-primer almost too difficult. In fact, he was achieving little in any area. Socially, his behavior during the library story hour was a good sample of the difficulty he had in getting along with other children. His wiggling and twisting and talking and poking distracted them. Their annoyance at him was becoming obvious and pointed.

Statistically, he was just one of that large group

...composed of boys and girls, most of whom are intellectually superior, who fail to read or whose reading is so inadequate that learning through reading is impossible. Estimates of the number of these retarded readers vary from 5 to 20 percent of the school population, depending upon the definition adopted. Such pupils

have significant potentialities for learning if proper conditions are provided.²

Specifically, he was Dick Smith, sullen and miserable, as he sat there—hating school, hating reading, hating books, hating almost everything, to the point where something had to be done immediately—after everything, it seemed, had been tried.

But he was honest about it as we talked it over after school with his teacher. He told us he didn't like the story, didn't like the library period, didn't like school. But, he *would* help to find a really interesting story for next week. We picked it out together, scanning through it, looking at the pictures, and reading parts of it. *Whitey's First Round-Up* was chosen.

The next library period went better. The children were delighted, of course, to have a horse story; they were interested to know that Dick had picked it out. Moreover, they decided to have a committee every week to select the story, and Dick was made a permanent member of the committee. The committee began its work immediately. There was no more disturbing behavior in the library. A symptom had been dispersed, but the problem remained.

¹Librarian, Campus Elementary School, State University of New York, State Teachers College, New Paltz, New York.

²Robinson, Helen M. "Meeting the Needs of Retarded Readers," *Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading*, p. 143. Vol. XI, No. 69. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949.

The problem remained, not so apparent in the library, but apparent very frequently in other places—in the classroom, on the playground, on the school bus. A boy, alert, vigorous, skillful in practical things, capable and responsible, was failing every day. He was facing symbols that meant almost nothing to him, and he couldn't help knowing that almost everyone else in the room was getting along better than he was. It was difficult to take, hour after hour, day after day, week after week; and sometimes Dick would get away from it, if he possibly could. He invented excuses—illnesses, and headaches (they were real headaches too); and sometimes when he couldn't stay home, he wandered away from the classroom, loitering in the lavatory or slipping out of the building. Almost every morning there was that awful struggle to get Dick to come to school. Frequently, his mother had to bring him—even to the door of the classroom.

That was the story that Dick's teacher told when we discussed the matter, trying to see just how the library program could help Dick and a few others like him—the children with normal abilities who had arrived in the intermediate grades without ever really having learned to read.

Theoretically, our developmental program should make unnecessary any so-called "remedial" program. Beginning reading is delayed until there is evidence of sufficient readiness; recognition is given to the fact that readiness operates at all levels. Promotions are based on chronological age, with exceptions—accelerations and retentions—made only when it seems best for the individual child, in

order to select for him the group which promises the best opportunity for maximum growth. Since we give each child an opportunity to progress at his own rate, there should be, in theory, no "Dicks"; no children feeling so discouraged and inadequate that they fall far short of their potentialities; no children who recognize themselves as failures, and, as Dick did, tell people that nobody can teach them to read.

But, there are "Dicks" in our school, as in many another school; and we try to exploit every resource we have to find for these children opportunities for success that do not require the use of academic skills. The library tries to help them, not only by finding them easy reading material, but also by distributing among them interesting jobs that do not require skill in reading.

We believe that if the philosophy of the school is really put into practice, it must extend to every odd job around the school that children love to do. We believe that the opportunity to serve in the library should not be reserved as a reward for the child who has already achieved, who already loves books and reading. We believe that it should be made available to the dull child, the disturbed child, and the non-reader, as well as to the child who has a high scholastic average, a good citizenship record, and legible handwriting. We believe that a guided work program can make the library into a laboratory for learning and practicing good citizenship, and a motivating factor in developing academic skills.

We have had a very informal, flexible plan that aims to stretch the available jobs

to include all children who ask for them and to draw in children who seem to need such experience. We have tried to make special provision for the child who, after an illness, is on a schedule of restricted activities and comes to the library when the other children go to the gymnasium. We try to put the new child in a situation where children are working together and talking about what they are doing. To the child with emotional difficulties we deliberately assign tasks that allow a free manipulation of materials—soaking up the paste jars, washing the paste cloths, cleaning the covers of picture books with wall paper cleaner. For some volunteers we provide jobs that give meaningful practice in newly-acquired skills. For example, we may ask the child just mastering the sequence of the alphabet to keep the encyclopedias in order. When children in the intermediate grades are getting systematic instruction in alphabetizing in the classroom, we frequently provide them with opportunities to help in filing cards in the card catalog.

We avoid classifying jobs. We admit, of course, that some jobs can be done successfully only by children who can read and write well, but we never reserve special jobs exclusively for the slow learner. A non-reader in the fourth grade may keep the paste jars in order one month and then the brightest girl in the seventh grade may take over. We have tried to avoid a system where inferior jobs are reserved for the "bluejays" and the "freight trains." In one sense, our library work program has been sprawling, somewhat unwieldy, and perhaps, on the surface at least, quite unsystematic. We had never attempted to evaluate its effect on any

particular child until Dick's problems came to the front.

Dick's membership on the library committee smoothed out the difficulty in the library, but it was in reality only a temporary expedient to get things started in the right direction while we were making a more comprehensive study of his problem and working out a plan that would fit in with his classroom program.

We found Dick's home situation potentially rich in opportunities for an interesting and creative out-of-school life. The oldest of four children, Dick lived on a ninety-acre farm stocked with animals, chickens, and, most important, three horses, which were ridden by all members of the family. From his earliest years Dick took an active interest in the farm and had assumed a great deal of responsibility for the care of the animals. As his mother told us, "Dick is a wonderful boy." Thus it seemed that she had a real appreciation for the child's help on the farm. Likewise there was evidence that she had a sympathetic understanding of his difficulties at school and considerable patience with his shortcomings. His father, however, appeared to have less understanding and attached much importance to Dick's passing his grade. Undoubtedly, Dick's feeling of inadequacy was also aggravated by the fact that his younger brother in the third grade was a proficient reader and often read material on an adult level, such as the *Saturday Evening Post*.

The most positive factors seemed to be Dick's long-abiding interest in farming, animals, and carpentry, his willingness to take responsibility, and the fact that, for the first time, he appeared to enjoy the

family story hour. Furthermore, his teacher reported that for the first time there was some evidence that he was seeing a necessity for reading.

In the classroom Dick was given individual help in reading, regularly and systematically; and he was encouraged in every possible way. But progress was slow, and at times there seemed to be no progress at all. His sight vocabulary was very limited. He knew only a few of the most common words, and he was completely at a loss when he tried to figure out words for himself. In fact, he had so little confidence in himself that he just wouldn't try—couldn't try. Hence it was impossible to find anything that he could read independently. Worst of all, he realized that the other children were doing things that he just couldn't do at all. Since this situation frequently became intolerable, it seemed necessary for Dick to get out of the room for short periods of time. We began to look for ways of giving him opportunities to get out of the room legitimately. Since the immediate problem seemed to be to get him to like school, we tried to devise activities that would give some pleasure, satisfaction, and success to each school day. Our theory was that if we could build up in Dick a liking for school, a feeling of personal adequacy, and, if possible, a sense of status in his group, we could teach him to read by the ordinary methods.

So we arranged for him to spend some time each day in the library, some of the time to be used looking for material that would help him in his building and planting enterprises, and the rest of the time to be spent doing odd jobs around the li-

brary. We tried to line up activities with books that would be fun; we tried, particularly at first, to find for him jobs that could be completed quickly and easily—jobs that would furnish some tangible, physical evidence of something accomplished. He watered the plants and straightened the chairs; he selected books with bright, gay covers to display on the tops of the shelves; he arranged the chairs for story hours; he pasted the pockets in the new books; and he delivered equipment, materials, and messages to teachers. Given a suitable assignment and careful instructions, Dick discharged his duties with commendable efficiency. We found that Dick could take responsibility of this kind better than the other children in his group. We tried to make sure that he got proper credit for it.

Sometimes Dick came to the library alone. More often, however, he brought a friend with him to help. Almost invariably it was Buddy, another fourth-grade boy who lived near Dick, who played with him and shared with him the interest in farming and building. Buddy was, however, almost two years older than Dick and seemed to make almost all decisions for the two boys. Although Buddy's presence often seemed to interfere with maintaining good rapport with Dick, it soon became apparent that it would be unthinkable to insist on any plan of work that did not include both boys.

The importance of their friendship became particularly obvious on the day that Dick told the library that his mother said that he must no longer play with Buddy. Dick left school that noon without leave to eat downtown with Buddy, who had

been given that permission by his mother. The whole day went so badly that Dick announced that he was not coming to school the next day. Furthermore, he placed a \$2.00 bet on it with one of the boys. When his mother brought him to school the next day, a compromise was effected whereby Dick would spend part of the day visiting his brother's room and the rest of the day working in the library. He did not have to face the fourth grade that day and on the following day he went back to the group without objection. As in many other incidents, Dick was allowed to save face.

It became increasingly obvious that any plan to work with Dick must include Buddy or any other friend that Dick might wish to bring along. Since Dick had no sense of belonging to his classroom group, since his opportunity to play with Buddy out of school was being restricted, we decided that it was important to allow him some time in a permissive environment with the only one of the peer group with whom he had any closeness. So the work became a group project—including at first just Dick and Buddy, and later taking in other children whom Dick brought along. The new helpers usually took their directions from Dick. If Dick sometimes missed the regular language arts period in the classroom, he had many opportunities to use his language skill in meaningful situations in the library workroom.

Gradually other kinds of jobs were assigned to the boys—jobs that involved a kind of reading or pointed to the necessity of reading. They learned to "slip" the books as they were returned to the charging desk. The librarian would say,

"These cards go in these books. We have to match them up. It says exactly the same thing on the book cards as on the pocket and you can be dead sure that you are right if you check the numbers in the corners." Gradually Dick learned to "slip" books independently, finding the cards which were arranged alphabetically in the date due file and replacing them in the books. It took a long time and Dick still depended to a large extent on matching the numbers rather than the authors and titles. Yet it was obvious that he was doing reading of a sort, for he would remark, "Here are two books by the same author," or "This guy must have written a lot of books." And, best of all, Dick found out that he could do it and be dead sure that he was right. The really big day came when Dick taught his younger brother to slip books.

Frequently we made lists of things to be done, but Dick did not use these lists as much as we had hoped. In fact, it seemed that he avoided even looking at them. Next we decided to record the activities each day in a log which Dick wrote himself, using the library typewriter and getting the needed assistance from the librarian or a clerical helper. The typewriter seemed to inspire great effort and Dick spent more time on the log than on the task he was recording. We had hoped that he would be willing to read these logs back to us; but when he appeared to be embarrassed at the suggestion, we dropped the idea. However, he asked permission to take the log home to show his mother.

Aside from the instances mentioned above, we did not talk about "reading" except as it came up casually in the conver-

sation. Nor did we avoid the subject. We simply did many things without it. We did try to find materials that the boys could use and enjoy. We found books that they could take home for their mothers to read to them. We found books that they could use—books about gardening, carpentry, and horses. We found diagrams that showed how to build teepees and log cabins. The boys learned how to notch the logs at the corner from Mason's *Woodcraft*,³ and "besides that they got some other good ideas", they said. They studied books on leather and they brought in for inspection their initial attempts made on scraps of leather the village shoemaker had given them. We were convinced that building cabins, planting gardens, and working in leather were vital in their lives. We were convinced that if we could prove to them that books could help them do these things, somehow we could teach them to read.

We tracked down materials from various sources. We searched through old magazines; we wrote for government bulletins; we borrowed from the college library. We still were not too successful in getting materials that they could use easily. Giving the boys the help we needed took more time than we had. We were conscious that we were doing only some of the things that needed to be done. In general, morale was very much better; but there were still storms. There were still days when Dick just couldn't get to school under his own power—still days when his mother had to bring him to school.

During the first few months the boys

³Bernard Sterling, Mason. *Woodcraft*. New York: Barnes, 1939.

needed rather firm reminders when it was time to go back to class. Gradually, however, they came to take the responsibility of watching the clock and leaving at the appointed time. Dick and Bud came to accept the idea that they could go to the library after they had done a certain amount of work in the classroom. Thus their jobs in the library seemed to serve as an incentive for doing their classroom work. We felt our way along all spring, taking our cues, it seemed, from the needs of the moment. About the middle of the morning of the first day of school the following September Dick arrived in the library with a new pal, Jimmy. After a few preliminary remarks about the vacation they went into the workroom, got the watering pot and attended to the plants. Then they found Dick's old folder in the file and discussed it at some length. They were back twice during the day to help out. They stamped the new textbooks and delivered them to the teachers. They took over Dick's old duties of the previous year and attended to them faithfully week after week. Soon they found some new interests. They became fascinated with the audio-visual equipment housed in the library workroom and became very helpful in caring for it. They learned to operate the film-strip projector and got together a committee, including some girls who could read well, to preview some filmstrips for class use. They learned how to use the slide projector and served regularly as projectionists in their classroom. Unquestionably their knowledge of this machine helped them to get acquainted with the substitute teacher who was with them for several weeks. It was the substitute teacher who suggested that Dick and Jimmy show the

cadet teacher how to operate the slide projector. Thus a special skill helped to make an adjustment that is often difficult for any child and seemed to be particularly hard for these two boys.

As Dick and Jimmy became interested in the machines and in other new jobs, many of their old housekeeping jobs were taken over by other children. Several girls from the same grade volunteered; and Dick not only taught them the routines, but remained a rather exacting critic. About the middle of the winter, George, another fourth grader, reported to the librarian that Dick had promised to give him his job in the library. Dick came in later that day to explain that he just had too much to do—he was helping in the school cafeteria and had a lot to do in Cub Scouts. Investigation revealed that Dick's decision had something to do with the reshuffling of friends that goes on frequently and quite normally among children of this age group. However, Dick's explanation was accepted at face value. Dick agreed to teach George how to do things and to introduce him to people around the building. He would be willing to help out in an emergency too. Here was Dick with new interests in a position to pass out a plum, a job with status attached, to George, a boy who was consistently above the average academically.

Two weeks later Dick was back and Jimmy was with him. They "had half an hour to help." They unpacked the new set of encyclopedias and stamped them. In the next library period Dick and Jimmy introduced the new *World Book* to the class, pointing the alphabetical arrangement, the index in volume 19, and the

double-paged map of the states. Soon afterwards Dick and Jimmy reported that they could arrange to spend a regular period in the library again.

Again Dick and Jimmy began to come in every day, but now it was a threesome—they had recruited Skip, another fourth-grader, a very adjustable boy who found it rather easy to get along academically. When the boys processed text books, the assembly line now included Skip stamping the books with the school ownership stamp, Jimmy numbering them with the mechanical numbering machine (they loved this new gadget), and Dick changing the numbering machine for each book and giving general directions to the new assistant when needed. By this time, the privilege of working in the library had become highly prized by many in the group. A rotating committee of girls helped out during the noon hour as Dick and Jimmy took on more difficult jobs. There were children of all levels of achievement anxious to take over any jobs these two boys no longer had time to do. The whole group seemed to set a high value on the kind of work Dick and Jimmy were doing.

It is impossible to evaluate accurately what progress Dick has made during the year. Obviously he is a much happier child. He comes to school without protest. This year he is an important member of his class; last year he had no real membership in the group. He now has a far better relationship also with adults. He has made some significant progress in the skills. He can now read a second grade reader well, and he is making definite progress in techniques of figuring words out for himself. In his attack on new words, he makes

good use of clues from the context; he is beginning to be conscious of similarities in words, to notice initial sounds and to give attention to suffixes. Whereas, last year he was struggling with his combinations in arithmetic, his teacher now reports that he is a "whizz" at long division. Best of all he now seems to feel that he is "getting along."

Many problems remain. His reading is still two years below the achievement level of most children his age. He finds adjustment to new people and to new situations more difficult than most children do.

Obviously it would be absurd to attribute all of Dick's progress, or any specific gain, to working in the library. In the classroom Dick's reading difficulty was faced directly. The decision to stay in the fourth grade for a second year worked out in such a way that not only could he work continuously with the teacher who had helped him make the only progress in reading he felt he had ever made, but also in that second year he frequently found himself in a position of authority where he could answer questions the other children couldn't and could make suggestions that they valued. In that second year he became not only a real member of the group, but on many occasions a leader. Also in that second year Bud was in a different group and Dick had a better chance to become a person in his own right. In this achievement of status which helped Dick mobilize his energies for learning the library experience undoubtedly helped much.

Dick's teacher said that working in the library was the first big thing that hap-

pened to Dick to change his frame of mind. Working in the library helped perhaps by making possible every day little bits of success. As Osburn says, "Sometimes a pathetically small amount of success will be sufficient."⁴ All of these things combined, we feel, to build a greater self-respect and feeling of adequacy—the rock-bottom foundation of real learning in reading and in other areas. We think that the time is almost in sight when Dick will make the long-hoped-for spurt that will bring his achievement in reading up to the average level of other children his age.

Working with Dick and his friends for a year has pointed to the necessity of accepting a child as he is at any stage and of recognizing the social context in which he operates; it has helped us "to realize how much a child's reading ability depends on his whole life."⁵ It has emphasized the importance of all agencies in the school working together to teach the whole child. Working with Dick has indicated something of the value of assigning jobs in the school library to include children of differing levels of ability and achievement. It has suggested the potentials of a system that will neither give all opportunities to the superior student nor pose as a panacea for all cases of retarded learning; a system that will merely assign jobs as far as possible on the basis of children's needs and interests; that will provide an environment in which children can have fun working among books; that will make op-

⁴Osburn, Worth J. "Emotional Blocks in Reading," *The Elementary School Journal*. Vol. LII, No. 1 September 1951, p. 28.

⁵Jeidy, Pauline, "Improving the Program in Reading," *Elementary English*. Vol. XXVI No. 1. January 1949, pp. 27-31.

portunities available to the children who need them most—the child who cannot read, the child who doesn't like books, the child who doesn't like school. Many of the attitudes important in learning to read are perhaps more effectively caught than taught, and a likely spot of contagion may well be a corner of the library workroom where some ardent little book-hater can for the first time smell the newness of books as they come fresh out of the carton; where, even if he can't read a word,

he can feel the newness of books as he checks through them to see that the pages are in right side up. It is very possible that some of the feeling may stay with him for a while until he wants to "tell the other kids about the new books," until he becomes eager to take one of them home for his mother to read to him, until he may go home feeling that he has done something important, that books can be fun, and that it would be very good to learn to read.

NO TUNE FROM THE HICKORY STICK

(Continued from Page 330)

They major difference lies in the youngsters themselves: The youngsters who decided that they wanted an anthology instead of Christmas cards, the youngsters who liked to sing better than play games. But the results may be equally satisfying.

A teacher living in this new type classroom activity must be prepared to change the channels which he feels his group should follow to attain a desirable goal. He should be freely willing to discard, temporarily, his careful plans for designing and writing verses for Christmas cards if a room anthology will stimulate the young poets to similar or greater experiences.

Of course, it's more work for a teacher to teach in this freer atmosphere—it takes more planning and subtracts from the

number of free hours a teacher has to himself after three o'clock—but the end results are so much more gratifying, so much more experienceful for both students and teacher!

In a few months' time, I learned a lot about the teaching of language arts in the elementary classroom. I discovered many new techniques in pupil-teacher planning. I also faced and hurdled many new problems with the children's help. But in this different kind of learning situation, the forty-one individuals in the sixth grade class attained a meaningful goal. Forty of them saw their own book, *Junior Poetry*, take the form of a valuable piece of printed material—and they were proud! The other one saw his forty students grow and display undreamed of cooperation in the classroom—and I was proud!

Factors That Influence Language Growth:

The Child's Equipment for Language Growth

CHARLOTTE WELLS¹

The child's ability to respond to his environment and to make use of his opportunities for learning depends, to a considerable extent, on the basic equipment he has for the task of acquiring language. Children must be able to see, hear, feel, move, understand, make associations, co-ordinate their activities, and adjust to the people and things around them if they are to grow at a normal rate in language ability.

We shall be concerned here with specific considerations of some of the factors within the child himself that enable him to acquire, retain, and improve language skills. Although this discussion of the child's equipment for language growth, of necessity, treats "the child" as a composite, and considers the essential stages that cannot be skipped if a child is to follow the developmental trends leading to language that is "within normal limits," (8, 19) the variability of individuals from the norm can never be overlooked.

Only brief mention will be made, in this section, of environmental factors that contribute to language growth, for the influences of the home, school, and community will be discussed in detail in subsequent articles in this series.

What Does the Child Need for Language Learning?

The child's contact with the world is through his developing senses and his intellect. Slowly, and sometimes painfully, he builds associations between what he sees and feels and hears and the meaning of those things. If he is to notice and respond, he needs to use language, as others do. His emerging linguistic abilities will help him to deal with the world around

him and will provide him with tools for other learning activities.

From the undifferentiated responses of the newborn infant, the complex adjustments and coordinations of language develop. Some of the factors needed for this emergence of a learned process from random activity are the physical, such as health, nutrition, glandular secretions that determine growth, muscular coordinations that can be trained, sensory and motor equipment that makes for reception of and response to stimuli; the psychological, such as intelligence and personal adjustment; and the environmental, such as the home and school situations and the influence of family, teachers, and playmates. (14) If all of these factors function to encourage, not to impede, development, the child will learn to understand and to use language. Stated more briefly, "Every child will learn to talk unless some important factor prevents speech acquisition." (20, p. 101.)

But we should remember that language is learned. A child is not born with the ability to understand what he hears, to say what he thinks, to read from a set of printed symbols, or to put down his ideas in written form. He learns to associate word with object, symbol with thing represented. Joe comes to realize, for example, that the combination of sounds so often directed at him means himself—his

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name—and that a slightly different combination of noises—"No!"—means that he must stop doing whatever he is doing. Ann learns to associate her mother's warning word with the hot stove and may even call a stove "a hot" for a while. Children learn to connect, with the objects they see, the sound combinations that reach their brains by way of their ears. They learn to combine and co-ordinate the movements of lips, tongue, jaw, larynx, and breathing mechanism to produce by imitation, the sound combinations that will get results from those around them. The emergence of language skills from the confusion of early infancy is indeed a complex and remarkable occurrence.

What equipment does the child need, then, if he is to acquire the complex skills that are language? Certainly the general factors cited above—the physical, the psychological, and the environmental—are important. However, those most directly related to the development of linguistic skill are intelligence, sense of hearing, physical structure, and muscular coordination. And, although a child has, at birth, certain of these prerequisites for producing and perceiving language, he needs to learn to employ them in his expanding relationships to his environment.

One important element in the combination of circumstances that makes language growth possible is the emotional atmosphere in which the child develops. As he enjoys emotional well being, as he is free from anxiety and tension, as he senses that he is loved and protected, he has an opportunity to grow in language with minimal distractions or disturbances. The importance of this environmental atmosphere makes inclusion of it essential here, but the matter of family influences will be the chief topic of the second in this series of discussions on language growth.

Within this environmental framework, the child must have, first of all, the power to make associations, to build neural pathways, to receive impressions and to respond with ac-

tivity. He must have sufficient intellectual capacity to be able to learn language habits and retain them. He does not learn all these associations immediately, but begins to acquire them during infancy and continues this intellectual process throughout his life. The relationship between intelligence and the development of linguistic ability has frequently been pointed out and emphasized by research. (3, 15, 20, 22, 23.)

Likewise of importance to the learning of language is the ability to hear. The baby does not begin to distinguish sounds until he is about two months old, although he may respond indiscriminately to noises and even to voices before that time (3, 7, 8.) However, unless he can receive and comprehend the auditory stimuli that bombard him, he will not respond with the vocalization and articulatory movements that will develop into oral language. The deaf baby will gurgle and cry, for deafness does not inevitably mean muteness, but he will not continue to use vocal sounds in response to others and to himself unless he receives special training. (7, 20, 21.)

The actual movements of phonation and of articulation need to be mastered if the child is to learn to use language. "Many neuro-motor differentiations must be achieved before (the child) reaches the threshold of that highly socialized form of communication known as speech." (7) p. 42 and 272. But motor development is not, in speech learning, a random sort of growth. (15) The child's babbling paves the way for the later, more conventional sound combinations that are words. He needs, therefore, an intact speech mechanism that is capable of functioning in the process of learning language.

He needs a respiratory mechanism that operates efficiently enough to keep him alive and that can, at the same time, be used to provide an air stream for the production of vocal tone. This stream of air, set into motion in the larynx to produce voice or passing unimpeded be-

tween the vocal bands, is molded into speech sounds by the lips, teeth, tongue, and palate.

The child needs an efficient mechanism for producing these speech sounds. This part of his equipment he has used for some kind of communication from the time he was born. (1) Now, as he begins to make use of it for language, he modifies the crying and gurgling and cooing to form words. He will use vocal tone for some sounds and not for others. He will make his vocal cords vibrate for all the sounds in "mama" and "bye-bye," but he will stop their vibrations for a fraction of a second in the middle of "cookie" or at the end of "cup." These complicated and rapid adjustments are learned by unconscious imitation if the intellect and the ear provide the tools for learning, and if the environment is conducive to the acquisition of speech.

In achieving words, the child needs equipment that will enable him to form the sounds of which the words are made. In addition to knowing words and their meanings, he needs to have, and to be able to use, tongue, lips, palate, throat passages, nasal cavities, and, eventually, teeth. The structures of the throat and mouth have been employed for the fundamental functions of nursing, swallowing, crying, and breathing, and must now be used for speech as well.

The chief learning problem here is the modification of the action, if the structures are intact and can function effectively, so that the lips, which have closed around the nipple in nursing, can now close and open for the "b" sound and other sounds. The proficiency developed in moving the tongue to push soft foods to the back of the mouth is now needed for tongue movements that can change rapidly from one to another. The closure of the passage between the mouth and the nasal cavities, used to prevent liquids from entering the nose, now must be alternately retained and abandoned in the transition from non-nasal to nasal sounds. In all this learning process, the child needs

speed, accuracy, steadiness, and strength of voluntary movement. (15) Furthermore, the child learning to speak develops awareness of what is happening to the structures he is using, for his kinesthetic sense helps him to control the various parts of the speech mechanism by letting him know where those parts are and what they are doing.

Throughout all these processes, the child co-ordinates his activities. His reception of auditory cues, his comprehension of meaning from those cues, his understanding and use of gestures and facial expressions, his selection of a word or words for response, his actual production of the word in spoken form—all these come in sequence or even simultaneously, in a short space of time, and with accuracy, while the child sits or stands or moves about, while he continues to be a living, acting, and reacting organism.

His coordination of activities is influenced, in part at least, by his general emotional and physical state. If he is well and happy, he will be more likely to respond adequately to stimuli for speech. If he is tired, upset, cross, hungry, thwarted, or otherwise disturbed, his oral responses may regress to babyish random activity. Many factors and influences combine to affect language growth.

All of the child's equipment should be "within normal limits" if it is to function at or near normal levels. Some children, however, whose structures for speech seem defective, still make sufficient compensation, in one way or another, to learn and to use oral language that cannot be differentiated from that of the so-called "normal" child. Many children, in spite of slightly subnormal intellectual ability, structure, or coordination, develop language skills that serve their needs adequately. And many with quite normal equipment for hearing and speaking fail to reach even average levels in these functions. Individual variations, rather than similarities, characterize children in the

process of learning language skills, but the many who achieve expected levels show us that the learning process, irregular though it may be, reaches a point of adequacy in most learners.

How Does the Child Use His Equipment for Language Growth?

Although skills in reading and writing are learned later, the child uses his equipment for language growth in the acquisition of skills in listening and speaking from the time he is a few weeks old. Unless he is physically handicapped by an inability to move or control the structures used in speaking, unless he has a congenital lack of some of these structures, or unless he is deaf or hard of hearing, he will probably have no physical barrier to the learning of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Mental retardation, illness, or emotional disturbances may interfere with his learning, but the "average child" will probably be able to make adequate use of his physical, mental, and emotional equipment in the process of acquiring language.

The sequence of development cannot be categorically stated, but knowledge of certain trends may help the teacher in the elementary school to understand the level to which a child has developed and may assist her in planning language work for him—work that he is mentally, physically, and emotionally ready to undertake.

From the birth-cry to connected, intelligent speech and reading is a long step, taken in a comparatively short time. The baby, learning first to understand through listening and then to speak through imitation, grows up rapidly to become the third-grader who can read silently or aloud and can write down his ideas. The third-grader soon becomes the high school sophomore and then the university student or housewife or business man who takes the use of language skills for granted because they are so much a part of everyday life. Throughout

this entire developmental process, the individual uses the equipment with which he was born and which develops as he grows and matures.

At first, the baby pays little attention to anything around him. Then, within his first two months, he begins to make some use of vision and hearing (3, 7.) Forms gain meaning and, as he grows a little older, he recognizes familiar persons and things—his mother, his toys, even himself (7, 20.) He seems to notice his surroundings and he begins to make intelligible, measureable responses to visual and auditory stimuli during the later half of his first year. (7, 8, 15.)

During this first half-year, the child makes many noises and may produce, without meaning, the sounds of his native language and those of many other tongues as well. (1) He will use about seven different sounds during his first two months. (11) He will probably produce vowel sounds before consonants and will use such vowel sounds as the "e" in "met" and the "i" in "him" and the "u" in "cup" before he uses others. By the time he is two and a half, he will use vowel sounds efficiently, his production of vowels being at least 90 per cent accurate by this age. (10, 16) His first consonant sounds may be those produced at the back of the mouth, (9) but he will use in words first those consonants that are made with the lips and the front of the tongue. As he becomes more facile in control of his musculature, he will learn the more difficult consonant sounds. (18)

As his awareness increases and as he becomes more able to control his speech mechanism, the child begins to use true language. His "first word"—a reasonable facsimile of a real word, used purposefully—is usually heard when he is between twelve and eighteen months of age, (1) although the range has been estimated as from nine to twenty-four months. (15, 20.) He now imitates what he hears, not at random, but with some socialization and for the purpose of getting something he wants, obtaining at-

tention, or controlling his environment and responding to it.

For some children, the process of language development seems to falter as they begin to combine words and express ideas, repetitions and hesitations being noted in their speech. A child may even be termed a "stutterer" and suffer from the implications of that label. Actually, repetition is part of the speech pattern of all children and no relationship between language maturity and repetition has been established. (4) Many conditions tend to increase the repetitions and hesitations in a child's speech, for "after all, it takes a child a few years to acquire the experience, the words and the language skills necessary for the smooth handling of ordinary conversation." (12 p. 445.)

After a child is about two and a half years old, his learning of language is rapid. Vocabulary increases from two or three words at one year to almost nine hundred words at the age of three and to almost two thousand words at the age of six. (1, 3, 13.) Nouns and verbs, used first, are joined by adjectives, adverbs, and other parts of speech (13) as the child's need for communication increases and as his store of experiences grows.

His listening ability, too, improves, so that he can follow directions and comprehend the meaning of many more words than he speaks. Neurological maturation brings increased auditory discrimination, so the child can tell one sound from another with greater accuracy, can distinguish between words more easily, and can identify his own errors. This increase in discriminative listening makes him more attentive to the speech of others and this, in turn, facilitates his self-expression and adds to his vocabulary.

During this same developmental period, from two to five, the child acquires additional skills in eye movement, focusing, and attention that will enable him to learn to read in due time. His physical activities, at first seemingly

random and meaningless, now take on some purpose and he stacks blocks, scribbles with crayons, takes things apart, handles objects more efficiently, and is getting ready to learn the muscular skills of writing.

His articulatory ability grows as he learns more words, listens to others, sees the movements made by the lips and tongues of other speakers, and as his neuro-muscular co-ordination increases. After his initial learning through experimentation, he acquires skill in producing and using speech sounds that are easily seen, easily heard, and easily formed; later, he learns those that are less visible, less audible, and more complex in articulatory movement. (1, 18, 20, 21, 22.)

Although the child's most advanced stage in language learning begins about three, it continues to mental maturity and beyond. (15) By the time he is ready to enter school, he is using speech as a facile tool (16) and can listen with some attention and understanding to material that is within the range of his experience and his attention span. He is ready, in terms of language growth, if he is an "average child," to make the step from home to school, from one environment to another, from a familiar situation to a new one. He is almost ready to begin to add, to the language skills of listening and speaking, those of reading and writing.

What School Factors Facilitate the Child Use of his Equipment for Language Growth?

If the child has the usual equipment for learning and using language in its various forms, and if he has made use of this equipment in something like a normal manner, he comes to the elementary school able to do many things. He can now listen, although his attention span may be short. He can speak, although he may need to develop a larger vocabulary, refine his sentence structure, and improve his articulation. He has ideas to express, even though his experiences may be limited. He has

made purposeful use of language for two or three years. (15)

The influence of the family and the home is now supplemented by the influences of teacher, classmates, the school situation, and the community. Detailed considerations of these various factors will be made in other articles in this series, but certain factors in the classroom situation will be considered here as they affect the use the child in school may make of his equipment for language growth.

Chief among these school factors are provision for the child's physical comfort, growth, and maturation; observation of his adequacy in vision and hearing; allowance for the development of his neuro-motor abilities for language skills; encouragement in the use of his mental capacities for continued language learning; and consideration of his ability to meet the new situation.

Free as the classroom atmosphere may be, the beginner finds physical restrictions that he has not met before. Just to remain in one place for even a short period of time may be a new experience. He may need to get rid of excess energy through oral self-expression if he cannot, for the moment, eliminate it by running and jumping. If he finds in language an outlet for his ideas and feelings and energies, he will settle down and enjoy the mental and linguistic activities of the classroom.

His use of language may be an index to his general physical condition. As he is well or ill, his speech may vary and often his verbal responses—what he says and how he says it—may serve to indicate his state of health. (6, 17.)

Boys and girls in the elementary school are constantly changing physically and mentally. As they grow taller and broader, as they see new things, as they form new concepts and build new associations, they need more and more opportunity for self-expression—for communicating with and receiving communication from

their environment. Better language skills may enable children to relate themselves more adequately to their expanding and demanding environment; wider experiences give them more to talk and write about and more understanding of what they hear and read.

As the child becomes older, he can perform more complex acts, his motor skills showing rapid improvement particularly when he is between nine and thirteen years of age. (15) His voice will change with physical maturity. He learns to articulate more effectively and to use his muscles more capably for writing. He has more efficient coordination of eye movement in reading, more discriminative ability in listening. Physical growth and maturation can be assisted, if not assured, if the teacher provides for them as they appear and encourages their development through suitable classroom activities.

Vision and hearing serve the child in the learning process. Thus, the teacher has a responsibility for observing the adequacy of these special senses. She should be aware of indications of visual and hearing problems, for often the child's retardation in language growth may be attributable to defective vision or, more probably, to defective hearing.

If he cannot see well, the child may be retarded in reading, fail to follow written directions, be clumsy in his movements, lack orientation, and react to his visual handicap by unusual forms of behavior.

If he cannot hear adequately, he may be inattentive, ask for repetition of directions or questions, cup his hand to his ear, or turn his head to take advantage of better hearing in one ear. His speech may be deviant, he may copy dictated materials that he cannot hear, he may be reluctant to participate in activities that require oral communication. The hard of hearing child, too, may behave in atypical ways—day dreaming, becoming a truant, or attempting to compensate for his social inadequacy by lying or stealing. (2, 5.) His suspicious alertness

or tantrums or obstinacies may also be signs for the classroom teacher to note as indicative of a hearing handicap. (7)

The school can assist the child who is handicapped in vision or hearing, first by finding him and then by providing the kind of special education he needs. A child can make maximum use of his special senses if he is provided with the stimuli to which he is ready to respond, if his physical surroundings give him the best opportunity for use of his special senses, and if he is encouraged to extend the quality and quantity of his visual and auditory observations as he matures.

With its constant regard for "readiness," the school can facilitate the language growth of the child by enabling him to use his developing neuro-motor abilities to his best level of achievement. If the child cannot write because he is not ready to undertake the manual activities of putting words on paper, the teacher can serve as his scribe. He can thus record his ideas, his vivid imaginings, his thoughts—in short, his communication—even though he cannot yet coordinate his muscular system for writing. He can be encouraged to express himself in other ways, by drawing, painting, modeling, and, of course, by talking. If the first-grader is ready to follow words across the page with his eyes, he may use and develop this skill in reading. If he can only look at pictures, he may need to grow into reading at his own rate. If he comes to second grade at seven with incomplete articulatory skills, he may need more time to develop the ability to form and use the complex "s," "z," "l," and "r" sounds that are usually the last to be learned because they are the most difficult to hear, see, produce, and combine. (20)

Throughout all his learning experiences, the child whose intellectual potential is greater has a better chance to develop language skills than does the child who is less capable mentally. Conversely, mastery of language may often serve as a reliable index to intellectual powers.

(21) Recognition of relationships between comprehension and expression, between thought and language, is another of the factors that enable the teacher to help the child to use his equipment for language growth.

The security and freedom from tension that characterize a desirable learning situation continue to be important. As he builds new relationships with adults and other children, the child needs language for communication to gain favorable responses from those around him and he needs an environment that facilitates his use of his constantly growing language skills.

Even at an early age, the child has certain abilities in language—chiefly in listening and speaking. He lives in a predominantly oral world for five or six years, but, as he grows older, he acquires more and more facility in using the equipment he has for all of the language skills. Throughout all his years, even as an adult, he will depend on his intellectual abilities, his association skills, his muscular coordination, his vision, his hearing, his kinesthetic sense, his physical structure, and his environmental experiences as means of facilitating his use of language.

Through listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as a child or as a maturing or mature person, the human being makes constant use of his equipment for language as a means of getting along with others and as a connecting link between himself and the society in which he lives.

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ENCOURAGING THE GROWTH OF VOCABULARY

(Continued from Page 335)

It has been found that a stimulating class environment *will* result in greater vocabulary development. By attacking the problem from these two directions, a direct program of word recognition skills and the provision of meaningful school experiences, we can hope to meet the needs of our boys and girls.

Current English Forum

Current English Usage Committee: Harold B. Allen, Adeline C. Bartlett, Margaret M. Bryant (*chairman*), Archibald A. Hill, James B. McMillan, Kemp Malone, Albert H. Marckwardt, Russell Thomas, John N. Winburne.

"I know that the split infinitive, which was taboo in my school days, is now allowed in certain cases. I have heard disagreement, however, as to the places where it is, and is not, permissible. Are there some good rules to follow about this matter?"

G. E. S.

The attitude towards the so-called split infinitive which has bedeviled students, teachers, and educated people in the United States for a long time was not grounded in the first place on any valid consideration of the structure of the English language. Professor Sterling A. Leonard wrote, "Apparently, it was both a discovery and an aversion of nineteenth-century grammarians."¹ Some of these grammarians had their notions of how a language ought to be constructed determined very largely by their training in such highly inflected languages as Greek and Latin. In such languages the sign of the infinitive is an integral part of a one-word form, as in Latin "portare" (to carry) or French "venir" (to come). In English, however, the function word "to," separate from the verb stem, has long been the sign of the so-called "prepositional" infinitive. There has never been any violation of the structure of English involved in the separation of "to" and the verb stem by another word or words. There are many uses of the infinitive without the presence of "to" at all. Simple infinitives occur in such sentences as "We saw the man *climb* the stairs" and "They heard the soldiers *fire* the gun."

Whether or not we place an adverbial modifier between the "to" and the verb stem in the

instances where we employ this form of the infinitive depends on where we desire the emphasis in the speech or writing. If our emphasis is on the verb, rather than on the adverb, we will "split the infinitive" without damage to our meaning, as in "He hopes to swiftly *complete* his work" or in "They tried to bravely *face* the danger." If, however, our emphasis is on the adverbial modifier, rather than on the verb, we tend to place the modifier after the verb, as in "He hopes to complete his work *swiftly*" or in "They tried to face the danger *bravely*." There are many sentences in which a "split infinitive" succeeds both in conveying the emphasis more accurately and in achieving a more euphonious sentence. Professor Otto Jespersen pointed out that we tend to feel the "to" as a part of the preceding verb, rather than as a part of a following infinitive.² In "She tries to speak" we are more likely to feel the "to" as part of the verb "tries" than as part of the verb "speak." It is but a short step to saying "She tries to clearly *emphasize* her words" when it is "emphasize" that is being stressed. If we want to stress "clearly," we place it after the verb, as in "She tries to emphasize her words *clearly*." We usually avoid separating a "to" from a following verb when the adverbial modifier is long or when there are two or more adverbs. "He wanted to speak incessantly" is less awkward than "He wanted to incessantly speak." And "They wanted to work quietly and effectively" avoids the strained quality of "They wanted to quietly and effectively work." It is on grounds of the intended stress of meaning and of euphony, therefore, that we decide whether to place a modifier between "to" and a following verb in any particular instance. No law of the Medes or Persians can cover all cases.

¹Sterling A. Leonard, *Doctrine of Correctness in English Usage, 1700-1800*, p. 95.

²Otto Jespersen, *Growth and Structure of the English Language*, p. 197.

"Many of my pupils say things like 'Due to sickness, I was out a week' and 'Due to rain, the game was called off.' I was taught that 'owing to' or 'because of' were the correct forms. What is the present status of 'due to' in sentences like these?"

W. F. L.

The present writer, like W. F. L., has been plagued with this matter. As a teacher he has over the years red-pencilled many such "due to's." Yet a look at the literature of our language will show numerous cases of "due to" in the writings of well-known authors. For a long time the use of "due to" to introduce an adverbial phrase was a mark of sub-Standard English speech and writing. Within recent years, however, this use of "due to" has been gaining frequency in informal Standard English, the English of educated people in familiar conversation and writing. Professor J. K. Kenyon made an interesting study of this matter some years ago.³ He writes, "Strong as is my own prejudice against the prepositional use of *due to*, I greatly fear it has staked its claim and squatted in our midst alongside of and in exact imitation of *owing to*, its aristocratic and respected fellow-citizen."⁴ It seems to the present writer that "due to" in sentences like "Due to his poor health, he did not attend" and "He spoke hoarsely due to a sore throat" are now characteristic of, and acceptable in, informal Standard English, but that "owing to" is still the more widely used, and preferred, form in formal speaking and writing. It is quite possible, however, that "due to" may in time become an acceptable alternate for "owing to" even in formal English.

"I have an English teacher friend who argues that 'I don't think so' and 'I don't think it will happen' are not good sentences because they are illogical. She contends that one is thinking when one makes statements like these, and that one ought to say 'I do not believe that

is so' and 'I do not believe it will rain,' etc. What's the right answer on this?" O. J. M.

The English teacher is leaning hard on a still widespread fallacy about language—the English language or any other. That any one word ever has its meaning fixed for all time may be called "the one word—one meaning" fallacy. A language grows and changes by various means. One of these ways is by having old words acquire new meanings. "Think," as a verb, has no very exact referent at best, since any one of a wide variety of conscious processes may be symbolized by it. In his *How We Think*, the late John Dewey distinguished five sorts of conscious activities, ranging from reverie or day-dreaming to consciously directed problem-solving. Psychologists have yet to determine the what, how, and why of what we ordinarily refer to as our "thoughts." The verb "think" has been used to symbolize any one of a variety of conscious states or processes in the history of English. An English teacher would probably not object to "I think it will rain" as an equivalent of "I believe it will rain," or to "I think it will not happen" as a substitute for "I do not believe it will happen." The verb "think" has long been as frequently used to stand for "believe," "predict," "feel," etc., as it has been used to mean mere conscious cerebration per se.

"The textbook I use states that it is incorrect to use 'if' instead of 'whether' to introduce a noun clause expressing a condition or a doubt. According to this rule one should say, 'We do not know whether the game will be played,' not 'We do not know if the game will be played.' However, I hear and read "if" in sentences like this quite often. Is it possible that the usage on this point has changed to some degree?"

D. F. W.

We should constantly remind ourselves that "rules" ought always to be descriptive of the actual language habits of the users of a language, and that the users of a language use

³J. K. Kenyon, "The Dangling Participle Due," *American Speech*, Vol. 6 (October, 1930).

⁴Kenyon, *loc. cit.*

it differently in varying situations. The "rule" cited is a faulty one on both counts. In their ordinary, everyday, familiar speech the speakers of English tend to choose a shorter, simpler form in preference to a longer, more complex one. While "whether" and "if" both express condition or doubt, "if" is the shorter and simpler of the two forms. The traditional explanation of this kind of sentence as involving a "noun clause" as the "direct object" of a "transitive" verb is one which many linguists question. In "He does not know (*if* or *whether*) the price is fair," the "action" is not one which is carried over from a doer to a receiver as in "The boy hit the ball." The verb "does know" is pointing to or describing a state or condition within the individual being talked about in the sentences. The fact is that the old concepts of "the parts of speech" are not very helpful in understanding how modern English works as a language.⁵

The use of "if" in such sentences is certainly established in informal, Standard English; and seems to be gaining acceptance in formal usage as an alternative for "whether."

"I have difficulty in getting pupils to use

⁵See the discussion of this matter in *The Structure of English* by Charles C. Fries.

the punctuation for the possessive case in sentences like "Mary's request was granted" and "John was his family's support." Is there some good means of explaining why the possessive case is required in such sentences?" H. T.

The term, "possessive case," is not a suitable one in cases of this kind. Fries uses the term "subjective genitive" for a phrase like "Mary's request" in the first sentence and "objective genitive" for a phrase like "family's support" in the second.⁶ In "Mary's request" Mary as subject is the origin of the act of requesting. In "family's support" the family is receiving ("objective") the act of supporting, of which John is the doer. It is really only by convention and tradition that we use the apostrophe as a marker for such relations. Explaining to a class the different kinds of relations which are marked conventionally by the apostrophe should help to solve the problem. The use of the apostrophe to mark even possessive genitives (Mary's hat; Carl's coat) is of fairly recent origin, dating only to the sixteenth century, when it was also employed frequently to indicate plurals.

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⁶Charles C. Fries, *American English Grammar*, pp. 75-87.

MARGUERITE DE ANGELI — WRITER AND ILLUSTRATOR FOR CHILDREN

(Continued from Page 325)

Books Written and Illustrated by Marguerite de Angeli and Published by Doubleday

*Ted and Nina Go to the Grocery
Store*, 1935

*Ted and Nina Have a Happy Rainy
Day*, 1936

Henner's Lydia, 1936

Petite Suzanne, 1937

Copper-Toed Boots, 1938

Shippack School, 1939

A Summer Day with Ted and Nina,
1940

Thee, Hannah!, 1940

Elin's Amerika, 1941

Up the Hill, 1942

Yonie Wondernose, 1944

Bright April, 1946

Jared's Island, 1947

The Door in the Wall, 1949

Just Like David, 1951

Look and Listen

Edited by RAOUL R. HAAS¹

Audio-visual devices are widely used in schools to-day—often wisely and, perhaps, just as often foolishly. Without an understanding of the psychology of audio-visual learning, it is small wonder that programs of activities involving reading and listening exclusively are found more frequently than they should be.

Traditionally, audio-visual equipment is regarded by many teachers as a means to diversion from the normal monotony or the provision of a needed respite for themselves.

"Look and Listen" is devoted this month to an orientation program for the school-wide use of audio-visual instruction. The point of view expressed by John P. Byrne² in the following paragraphs is intended to show particularly the role of audio-visual instruction in providing real help for the conscientious teacher in his work with all pupils. Suggestions for solving the problem of the retarded learner, as Mr. Byrne also points out, may be found—in part, at least—by providing the real stimulus to learning which a functional audio-visual approach offers.

Our readers are cordially invited to submit reports of their utilization of audio-visual instructional materials and methods for publication in "Look and Listen." Manuscripts should be addressed to the Director, the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College, 3601 North Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago 41.

Orientation to A-V

A current billboard advertisement informs us of the ancient wisdom of Confucius who

¹Mr. Haas is Director, the North Side Branch, Chicago Teachers College.

²Mr. Byrne is Principal, the Felsenthal Public Elementary School, Chicago.

said, "One picture is worth ten thousand words."

In every language one can find the equivalent of "seeing is believing," or "actions speak louder than words," or "the picture tells the story." Everyone knows that these adages are true, yet teaching, the most important kind of communication, seldom makes sufficient use of the many devices available to make our communications more interesting, more effective and more memorable.

When someone truly understands a situation, an explanation, a direction, he is likely to say, "I see." This is because he has evolved for himself, out of the welter of impressions, a picture in his mind's eye. The teacher's effort to communicate, to tell, to teach, usually takes the form of words, either oral or written. Traditionally she talks. Sometimes what she says "registers." But even the most earnest and competent student cannot "see" all or even nearly all of what she says and what he reads.

To-day new methods and devices are available by which we can reinforce the written or spoken word, add interest to it, make it more attractive and palatable, and more lasting to the memory. Motion pictures, filmstrips, and slides have been available for many years, but the impact of necessity made these devices the wonderfully improved things they are today. The necessity of training vast numbers of men and women quickly and uniformly for the armed forces called for the best in teaching devices. And because the best had to be standardized, the recorded word and picture came to the fore in the perfected form we now know. Out of the experience of training twelve million soldiers in over 1400 specialized jobs came many stimuli to the audio-visual approach to

learning. It is likely that as World War I gave great impetus to the testing movement in education, World War II may have given the same impetus to audio-visual education.

Despite the recognized importance of these discoveries it has taken the schools, as always, a long time to catch up. Many of us completed our formal educational experiences before our colleges gave proper recognition to the audio-visual emphasis in teaching. But we can't let that deter us from taking advantage of something so important.

The doctor who knows nothing of sulfa drugs or of the many antibiotics we call the "miracle drugs" cannot be entrusted with the health of our children. Someone recently noted that 90% of the prescriptions doctors write today could not have been compounded even fifteen years ago. You wouldn't want a doctor for your child who had learned nothing in the past fifteen years. The fact that these drugs did not exist when he went to school, or that their use was not taught in the medical college which he attended would not serve as an adequate excuse, nor would it justify his continuing in practice.

Should the public expect any less of a teacher? Do not members of the profession have the same responsibility for keeping up to date in that knowledge and those developments which relate to success in their own jobs?

Inadequacy of Verbal Language

There is so much to teach and so little time to teach it. This is the double-edged complaint of all teachers. And the complaint is justified. Knowledge is and has been multiplying rapidly in the past twenty years. But the teacher cannot just throw up his hands and denounce the circumstances. The problem that the teacher must face is that verbal language is no longer enough; he must master other languages and media of communication and learn to apply them to the problems of the classroom. For ex-

ample, we know that a million words will never be as effective as a glance of two seconds at a rock, if the problem is to develop an idea of the shape of the rock. Yet to-day our texts are filled with thousands of words straining to do what pictures can do more effectively and more quickly. These pictorial methods must not be regarded as something extra, but as something integral. The basic task is to discover which combinations of words, pictures and recordings will serve best and how to make them available when needed. This will not be easy, for it makes a break with tradition. It means starting all over again to learn to listen and to read pictures. It means using pictures not as illustrations or embellishments, not as designs to break the monotony of the printed pages, but as a language, as a means of communication.

It is obvious and undeniable that a visual image is likely to be a memorable one. Years afterwards, almost everyone can see vividly some picture which illuminated and illustrated a story in a third-or fourth-grade reader. Long after the story itself would have died in memory the picture keeps it bright and alive. In the same way, an explanation of a grammatical rule or a scientific truth which is accompanied by a sharp, clear pictorial representation will be likely to be "permanently" learned.

Since "permanent" learning is the goal of teaching, the aids to this goal must be of first interest to teachers. Why, to attack the question negatively, is so much learning not "permanent?"

Dale has made certain generalizations in reply to this question:

1. We forget when what we are to learn does not seem important to us, either because it lacks importance in itself or because we fail to see any apparent relationship between this new piece of information and things that we already know.

2. We forget when we do not see clearly what it is that we are supposed to be learning or when we are not properly shown how to use this new item.
3. We forget when we do not make use of what we have been asked to learn in our daily living.

Viewed positively, then, we foster most effective and efficient learning when we have:

1. Proper motivation—the "why."
2. Clear goals—the "what."
3. Adequate use—the "how."

It has been proved by many experiments conducted over a long period of time and with varied subjects that learning is made more permanent by the use of audio-visual materials. Particularly is this true in the case of the special problems associated with children who are retarded or who come from meager environments. No one can overemphasize the state of mental fog in which thousands of our children find themselves as the waves of words, words, words pass over their misunderstanding heads. Extended studies conducted at Columbia University and the University of Kansas show that the retarded pupil can keep up more easily because objectively illustrated subject matter is both comprehensible and interesting to him; and, if the subject matter is made understandable and interesting, he will not be as likely to leave school prematurely.

An experiment at Yale University extending over seven months and designed to find out if pupils learned more history when the "Chronicles of America Photoplays" supplemented conventional instruction found that the pupils given the enriched program of learning actually did twenty percent better than other children in tests which followed the respective periods of instruction. "Average children, with the aid of the photoplays, learned as much as bright children did without them."

Over and over similar experiments have repeated these findings. There is little doubt that

learning is increased, enhanced, made more lasting, by the use of a variety of audio-visual aids. No one can deny their value.

A question yet to be answered is: "What audio-visual materials?" A film called "From Trees to Tribunes" may be passed from room to room indiscriminately and serve to "relieve the monotony," or allow the teacher to catch up on some of the ubiquitous paper-work with which her life is beset. But it has no particular learning value unless it is actively related to a social studies problem currently before the class. As an integral part, a teaching aid, to a project on lumbering, the picture is important, useful and truly helpful.

A-V and The Learning Process

This brings up an important and fundamental point. When the children cry, "Yippie, movies!" and the teacher echoes, "Yippie, movies," both are thinking of the film or the slides or the filmstrips as entertainment. These devices are entertaining, surely, often of enormous and compelling interest; but they are not designed just for fun. They are not intended to compete with the popcorn-strewn Saturday movies serving three (Count 'em—three!) westerns for the child's fifteen-cent admission price. They must be so integrated, so introduced, and so followed-up that they are recognized as serious, albeit wonderful, parts of the learning process.

An audio-visual program of education demands, more than expensive devices, a point of view, an awareness of the nature of effective learning and teaching, an imaginative approach to education. The wonderful externals and paraphernalia of learning are not really absolutely essential to it. A blackboard and several pieces of brightly colored chalk in the hands of an imaginative teacher add up to a visual aid as useful as an expensive set of filmstrips. The teacher whose verbal facility and flair for word-pictures make it possible for her to give graphic and varied explanations has already at her disposal the finest audio-visual aid to education.

For example: the best primary-grade teachers regularly employ countless audio-visual aids to learning. These include objects, specimens, sandtable models, charts, flashcards, field trips, dramatic participation, recordings, pictures, and all the other devices which the training and imagination of these teachers suggest. Add to these objects of her own devising some of the wonderful strips and films for young children prepared by the commercial producers. After a first-grade has read *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* it becomes increasingly real to them with the colored pictures and text which they themselves can read "right off the wall."

As we move along in the educational process we are likely to see a slowing down in this tendency to employ audio-visual instructional materials. Even the physical appearance of each succeeding grade-room is likely to be a little more barren of visual aids, the emphasis to be increasingly on the written and spoken word. Yet the need for every possible help to learning goes on. The need may even increase as children find themselves bogging down under the pressure of words they do not understand and ideas which simply do not register. Excessive dependence on text books is certainly a major cause of the drop-outs which come when children's ability to understand words is outstripped by the demands which words put upon them.

In the upper grades, audio-visual instructional materials have potentially great contributions to make in extending the vicarious experiential background for all students. So many meaningless words, undigested concepts flow over the heads of our children that we must find ways of "drawing the picture" which will make them able to understand and remember.

In the field of science, reading assignments and workbook "experiments" and lecture-demonstrations leave much to be desired. Direct experience gained from planting seeds and watching growing plants develop, from building a balanced aquarium, from field trips to local

museums—the chance to see, to feel, to smell, to taste—is so much more valuable. The motion picture is a wonderful help in seeing how something really works or grows or develops. Take the example of the teaching of a unit on the Solar System, surely one of the most difficult concepts a twelve-year-old is asked to master. A wonderful sound film, "A Trip to the Sky," can be used as an introduction. Children dramatize the motions of planets around the sun. The class can build a scale model of the sun and planets. (A large ball placed on the athletic field represents the sun. The earth is a medium-sized pea near the other end of the field. It is a three-mile jaunt by bicycle and on foot to locate Pluto, the small pea representing the outermost-known planet.) Along with readings and discussions for basic information, the unit may be culminated by another sound film, "The Solar Family." In ways such as this and through a great variety of approaches—reading, talking, viewing, dramatizing, listening—it is more likely that every pupil, regardless of the limitations of ability, will find one thing he can do, understand and enjoy. And in this way do audio-visual instructional materials serve purposefully to improve the quality and quantity of learning.

Stories of children's misconceptions as revealed through their examination papers are endless and some of them are very funny. One boy wrote that "the American Revolution wrote mean letters to the French Revolution." When at the teacher's puzzled inquiry, he was called upon to explain, he replied: "Well, the book said that the American Revolution corresponded roughly with the French one."

Essentially these stories are not funny. Rather, they reveal dramatically the failure of children to understand what they hear and read. They point up, as perhaps nothing else can, the necessity for our finding many methods, devices and techniques for helping them in the complex process of growing intellectually.

The Educational Scene

Edited by WILLIAM A. JENKINS¹

As another school year gathers momentum and as the pupils get used to the confinement of the classroom walls for five-six hours a day, the teacher is probably faced with the endless problems of where to find new ideas and where to locate, easily and inexpensively, new materials to refresh the old courses. Here are a few items which appeared before the last school year ended, but which came across our desk too late to appear in this column, that might help fill these needs.

Having volunteered to experiment with an English-social studies combination for the new school year the first item that caught our eyes was an article by Nora Beust of the U. S. O. E. in the March issue of *School Life*. "Books to Help Build International Understanding" is an annotated bibliography of 32 books published in 1951 which will provide source materials for teachers wishing to develop units in the area of international understanding, and which will provide good reading for boys and girls who want to be a part of what is going on in the world today. The books will tell them more about the people who live in places discussed at the dinner table, seen on television, referred to in class, or read about in the newspapers.

Teachers who cannot locate a copy of the March *School Life* or who want additional titles should write for the mimeographed bibliography (selected for children and young people with special reference to the United Nations) from the Office of Education, Federal Security Agency, Washington 25, D. C. Most of the annotations include grade levels of the books.



Probably the most delightfully informative article we've read in the past year is S. I. Hayakawa's "Linguistic Science and the Teaching of English," which was published in the

Jan.-Feb. issue of the *Baltimore Bulletin of Education*. The article is a transcription of a talk Professor Hayakawa delivered before the English Club of Maryland.

In a sprightly, humorous manner Hayakawa shows that the schools, through their two-valued prescriptive grammar, i.e., right and wrong in matters of usage, are adding to the neurotic personalities of our times by creating anxiety neuroses and neurotic behavior as the result of unnatural, awkward, and inappropriate language situations in the school. As a matter of fact, he points out, we often reduce them to paralysis in these situations. Drawing on the research of Fries, Pooley, Leonard, etc., Mr. Hayakawa proceeds to demolish the right-wrong viewpoint, points to teaching based on this principle as linguistically unhealthy.

In place of the right-wrong concept Hayakawa views the good speaker or writer of good English as the one who speaks or writes *naturally with more than one level of usage at his command*. This seems to imply that the teacher has the responsibility not just to teach, for example, that "She is enthusiastic about flying" as the only correct way to express the idea, but that with the added dimensions of time, place, and person involved the idea may also be expressed by "She is enthused over flying." He draws this analogy between clothes and speech:

Overalls are neither correct nor incorrect. There are certain situations in which overalls are the only sensible thing to wear, but you can't wear them to a dinner party. Dinner jackets, on the other hand, are neither correct nor incorrect. If you're going to plaster your room you don't want to wear a dinner jacket, that's all. If you're going on a fishing trip, you don't want

¹John Deere Junior High School, Moline, Illinois.

your dinner jacket, either. There is no such thing as correct attire for all occasions, is there? And, in like manner *there is no such thing as correct linguistic attire for all occasions . . .*

An additional criticism that Mr. Hayakawa offers English teachers, is that the way we treat English themes is as unsympathetic as we would be if we were talking to a person and when he replied we only watched his Adam's apple move rather than listen to what he said. With pupils we are so concerned with the gyrations of the pupils' escritory Adam's apples—margins, tenses of verbs, case, etc.,—that we often don't know if he has said anything worth while. We even discourage him to say anything by making the gyrations all-important. We do not clearly distinguish for our pupils the difference between writing and editing. Both skills are vital but they must be distinguished.

One final suggestion in Professor Hayakawa's article that intrigued us, and one we intend to try this year if we can obtain the instrument, is to use an opaque projector in our composition classes—for the editing part of writing, that is. Hayakawa suggests that themes or compositions be projected on a screen or wall and with the teacher maintaining control but just sitting in, let the class proceed to edit the writing. In this manner, too, the writing situation still exists, with an audience, which is not always true when the themes must be read. They then become oral exercises with the mechanics of writing relevant only to the teacher, or, perhaps, to the teacher and the one pupil concerned.

To our way of thinking it is unfortunate that this excellent article appears in such a relatively unobtainable journal as the *Baltimore Journal of Education*. However, we suggest that interested teachers write to the Bureau of Research, Baltimore Public Schools, Baltimore, Md. Provision might be made to distribute reprints of the article.



NCTE President Lennox Grey has announced the appointment of the following persons as members of the Resolutions Committee:

Chairman, Helene W. Hartley, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y.; Walter Brownsword, Central High School, Providence, R. I.; Anna L. Campbell, Prairie View College, Prairie View, Texas; Karl Dykema, Youngstown College, Youngstown, Ohio; Paul Farmer, Henry W. Grady High School, Atlanta, Georgia; LaVerne Strong, State Department of Education, Hartford, Conn.; Mildred Grimes, Dana Hall School, Wellesley, Mass.; Helen Hanlon, Language Education Department, Board of Education, Detroit, Michigan; Fannie J. Ragland, Board of Education, Cincinnati, Ohio.



The following is the result of the Elementary Section election:

Elementary Section Committee, 1953, to take office after the November election: Chairman, Mildred A. Dawson, Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, N. C. (1953); Muriel Crosby, Wilmington Public Schools, Wilmington, Delaware (1955); Agnes Gunderson, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming (1955); Leland Jacobs, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio (1953); Grace Rawlings, School No. 64, Baltimore, Maryland (1954); Ruth E. Swanbeck, Keewaydin School, Minneapolis, Minnesota (1954); Edna L. Sterling, Seattle Public Schools, Seattle, Washington (1955). (Miss Crosby, Miss Gunderson, and Miss Sterling replace Professor Artley, Miss Lindahl, and Miss Ragland).

Directors Representing the Elementary Section, to assume office before the convention: May Hill Arbuthnot, Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio (1953); Marie M. Hughes, William Stewart School, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah (1954); Marian Jenkins, Division of Ele-

mentary Education, Los Angeles County Schools, Los Angeles, Calif. (1953); David Russell, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. (1955); Miriam Wilt, Teachers College, Temple University, Philadelphia, Penna. (1954); Paul A. Witty, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill. (1955). (Professors Russell and Witty replace Miss Cadwallader and Mr. Dumas.)



Notice of Proposed Amendments to the NCTE Constitution

The Executive Committee of the Council has approved the submission of the following amendment to the Constitution and two amendments to the By-laws for consideration by the members of the Council at the Annual Business Meeting on Thanksgiving afternoon:

Insert before the last sentence of paragraph one of Article IV of the Constitution this sentence: 'Teachers retiring from service on or after their sixty-fifth birthday who have been Council members continuously through the preceding ten years may become emeritus members.'

Insert in the second sentence of paragraph one of By-law I after the words 'student members' these words: 'and for emeritus members.'

These amendments would give legal warrant for these memberships, and fix the dues at \$1.75. A few have been issued on the fiat of the Executive Committee at the impossibly low rate of \$1.50, which cannot be continued.

Add a fourth By-law: These By-laws may be amended by majority vote of the members attending any Annual Business Meeting, provided notice of the proposed change has been given to all members at least thirty days before the meeting; or by three-quarters vote of members attending the Annual Business Meeting.

There is at present no provision for amendment of the By-laws, but it would always seem possible to add a by-law, which isn't an amendment. This will provide the machinery for future amendments if needed.



American Education Week 1952 will be observed November 9-15. The three sponsoring organizations, the American Legion, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and the National Education Association have announced the theme for this year's observance as "Children in Today's World." The daily themes for the week starting on Sunday, November 9, are: Their Churches, Their Homes, Their Heritage, Their Schools, Their Country, Their Opportunity, and Their Future.



Here are a few publications we received which space will permit us to mention but briefly:

You Can Read Better, by Paul Witty and Harry Bricker

You and Your Problems, by Stanley E. Dimond

Getting Along in School, by Bernice L. Neugarten and Paul J. Misner

Clubs Are Fun, by Mildred C. Letton and Adele M. Ries

Why Children Misbehave, by Charles W. Leonard; all published by Science Research Associates, 57 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10. The first four can be used as class materials with advanced elementary pupils, or in the junior and senior high schools. Single copies are forty cents.

Strangers and Neighbors, by Clarence Senior, is a recent Freedom Pamphlet published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith. It is the story of our Puerto Rican citizens—as strangers in their mother country, their fears, the myths about them, and their life in New York City where they have been migrating recently in large numbers. A regional topic, but we view it as important to all who wish to understand the other fellow better. Suitable for use in high schools. Anti-Defamation League, 212 Fifth Avenue, New York 10. Twenty-five cents per copy.

A Healthy Personality for Your Child, by

James L. Hymes. A popular version of part of the *Fact Finding Digest* of the Midcentury White House Conference on Children and Youth. Supt. of Documents, USGPO, Washington 25. Fifteen cents per copy.



Here are the Junior Literary Guild selections for the month of October, 1952.

For boys and girls 5 and 6 years of age: *No, No, Taffy!*, by Jean McDevitt. Doubleday and Company, Inc., \$2.50.

For boys and girls 7 and 8 years of age: *Bronto*, by Hetty Burlingame Beatty. Doubleday and Company, Inc., \$2.00.

For boys and girls 9, 10, and 11 years of age: *This Boy Cody and His Friends*, by Lee Wyndham. Longmans, Green and Co., \$2.50.

For older boys, 12 to 16 years of age: *Moccasin Trail*, by Eloise Jarvis McGraw. Coward-McCann, Inc., \$2.75.



Science Research Associates, 57 West Grand Avenue, Chicago 10, Illinois, has published an excellent new pamphlet entitled "Your Child and Radio, TV, Comics and Movies," by Paul Witty and Harry Bricker, addressed to parents and teachers. The booklet provides abundant information concerning children and mass media and suggests ways of providing appropriate guidance. The price is 40 cents each, three for a dollar.



We wish to make a correction for an item which appeared on page 235 of the April 1952 issue: the four-page list of "Distinguished Children's Books of 1950," listed as being published by the American Library Association is published by the Sturgis Publishing Company, Sturgis, Michigan.



October 15 is Poetry Day. Last year, according to the National Poetry Day Committee, 38

states observed this occasion with programs of poetry and about poetry and with special poetry writing projects. Special exhibits of books of poetry were arranged in schools and libraries. National Director of the Committee is Etta Josephean Murfey, 613 N. Stella Ave., Lakeland, Fla.



"Reading Is Fun" will be the slogan for the 34th annual Book Week to be celebrated throughout the nation November 16-22. Big books, little books, books of every shape and description form the background of the colorful 1952 Book Week poster designed by artist Roger Duvoisin. The full-color 17" by 22" poster shows a young boy sitting atop a ladder, absorbed in a new world hitherto hidden in the top shelf of a large bookcase.

To emphasize the value in books and reading, book fairs, exhibits, programs and displays will be sponsored by schools, libraries, book stores, parent-teacher groups and other youth and community organizations. Low-cost promotion materials for use in these celebrations include the full-color poster mentioned above, four teaser-streamers designed by Peter Burchard, Berta and Elmer Hader, Robert Lawson and Ralph Ray, Newbery-Caldecott book marks, a picture-quiz game depicting 24 well-known children's book characters, and recordings by Paul Tripp, TV's Mr. I. Magination, and May Hill Arbuthnot, expert in children's literature.

A free manual describing all Book Week material and complete order-form can be obtained through the Children's Book Council, 50 West 53rd Street, New York 19, New York. The Council, in addition to its work connected with the organization and promotion of National Children's Book Week, is a year-round center of promotion and information on children's reading and related subjects.

Review and Criticism

For the Teacher

The English Language Arts. Prepared by the Commission on the English Curriculum, National Council of Teachers of English. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1952.

Although the Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English has entitled Volume I in the new Curriculum Series, *The English Language Arts*, a more inclusive title could have been justified. In reality, the Commission has developed the broad frame work for education in a democratic society. Sound principles of education are shown to be applicable from the preprimary level through the graduate school of the university. By means of carefully selected illustrations at each level, the Commission has avoided vague and meaningless generalizations and has made the book as valuable to the kindergarten as to the secondary school teacher. At the same time, the Commission shows the essential continuity of educational experience and does not minimize the importance of the growth process at any level of maturity.

The volume is divided into four parts: Part I, Making the Curriculum; Part II, Suggested Programs; Part III, Problems Faced by Curriculum-Makers; Part IV, Evaluating the Outcomes of Instruction. The book has a fifty-page bibliography and a ten-page index. The bibliography is a highly-selected list of references classified under such topics as: curriculum-making; language and growth; the relation of English to the rest of the curriculum; general methods of teaching high school English; the library and the language arts program; caring for individual differences; teaching grammar and usage; teaching speech; teaching written composition; teaching spelling; teaching handwriting; teaching listening; teaching mass

modes of communication; teaching literature; sources of information about books; teaching of reading and semantics; helps for selecting books for slow readers; general books on appraisal of growth; general construction of tests and other measures; pupil self-evaluation; observation, interview, and anecdotal records; measurements of attitudes and behavior; tests of reading and literature; tests of English form; analysis of written products; evaluating speech; evaluating listening; evaluative criteria for language arts programs. A list of trade books referred to in the text has been provided to supply the reader with complete information concerning author, title, publisher and date of publication for each book. The index will provide a valuable tool for busy teachers in their effective use of the book.

In Part I, the Commission establishes the basic principles in teaching the language arts. The Commission sees that the "development of language power is an integral part of the total pattern of the child's growth" which can be guided, directed, stimulated "but cannot be hurried." Growth must proceed at each individual's own rate. The Commission recognizes the fact that "language must develop in a social situation." Acceptance of this principle determines not only the selection of language experience which people need in their daily relations with others but directs attention to the necessity of creating a classroom atmosphere which is warm, hospitable, and accepting of ideas, a classroom in which each child is free to be and to do his best.

The entire volume is based on sound principles of human growth and achievement. The communication arts are skills. If they are to be achieved they must have a rich content of interest and substance. Provision is made at every level for children, youth, and young adults to

have a wide variety of worth-while activities. At every level the readiness of the learner is a major consideration but within each age group provision is made for individual differences. Part II which outlines the broad scope of the language arts at each level of education promises to make a profound contribution to American education in a long-needed vertical continuity of learning experience from preprimary through the graduate school.

Curriculum workers throughout the country will welcome the thoughtful approach the Commission has made to the various problems confronting all groups faced with the necessity of developing a scope and sequence for a language arts program. The Commission has undertaken the arduous task of exploring and evaluating research and of pooling the judgment of about one hundred fifty well-qualified experienced workers from all parts of the country by means of the committees which worked on reading and literature, language and writing, speech, and listening. Part III undertakes the task of answering such questions as: What should be the relative emphasis upon the various phases of the language arts and how can they be interrelated? Shall there be planned or incidental programs in the language arts? What is the relationship of the language arts to the total curriculum, to the library, and to the life of the school? How can the needs of individual pupils be met? What shall be taught in grammar and linguistics?

Part III designs the broad framework for the program in speech and writing, in listening, in mass modes of communication, in literature, in reading and semantics. Although these facets of the language arts are treated in separate chapters, no tendency to compartmentalize them is evident. The groups responsible for the separate analyses were aware of the full significance of the language arts and their essential interrelatedness.

The final chapter of the book constitutes

Part IV: Evaluating the Outcomes of Instruction. The purpose of evaluation according to the Commission is "to identify the needs of the learner," and provide "important information for use in guidance" in stimulating self-direction and in "planning and replanning the language arts curriculum." The evaluation methods are in accord with the purposes which have been consistently enunciated throughout the volume. Effective evaluation, therefore, should "identify changes in behavior which give evidence of an improved attitude toward language and increased skill in its use" but it must also include "the degree of personal adjustment achieved by an individual through understanding of what language does to facilitate or to handicap adequate human relations."

Educators throughout the length and breadth of the country are deeply indebted to the distinguished members of the Commission on the English Curriculum and its participating committees for developing the broad framework for the language arts which this volume contains. The work of the Commission provided the channel through which the experience of successful educators throughout the country could be made accessible in the service of the children and youth of America. Finally, the Commission has achieved its purpose in making available a method of work on curriculum problems which should release the latent creativity among teachers everywhere it is followed. In the same degree that the volume provides a picture of American education at its best, the Commission with economy of space and precision of delineation has presented methods of curriculum development applicable, because of their soundness, to all curriculum areas. The profession will be looking with eager anticipation to the appearance of the four subsequent volumes in the Curriculum Series of the National Council of Teachers of English which will deal with language arts in the elementary school, in the secondary school, college

teaching of English, and the preparation of teachers of the English language arts.

Helen Heffernan

State Department of Education
Sacramento, Cal.

The Structure of English. By Charles Carpenter Fries. Harcourt, \$4.00.

Professor Fries' influential *American English Grammar*, published in 1940, dealt with the grammar of usage at various social class levels. This new publication deals with the grammar of the sentence. Unlike the earlier volume, which was based upon a great collection of letters, this study derives its data from mechanically recorded conversations amounting to more than 250,000 running words. Students of the English language will find Fries' scientific treatment of the sentence fascinating and challenging.

The Teaching of English. Issued by the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952. \$2.50. (American Branch of the Press is at 32 East 57th Street, New York 22, N. Y.)

American educators, who tend often to be provincial, will find this discussion of the teaching of English in England enlightening. They will discover that many of the problems are similar to those encountered in the United States and that many of the advanced ideas found in American professional literature are shared by our British colleagues. They will be interested in the differences in outlook, too.

The Psychology of Teaching Reading. By Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn. Ronald Press, \$4.75.

A lucid and highly practical discussion of the psychological aspects of the reading process. Although the authors make abundant reference to research studies, the style is smooth, and understandable to beginners. Chapter headings include: "Reading as Growth," "The Concept of Reading Readiness," "The Psychology

of Methods of Teaching Reading," "The Evaluation and Measurement of Achievement in Reading," and others.

The Relationship Between the Reader's Attitude and Certain Types of Reading Response. By Anne Selley McKillop. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University. \$2.75.

In this interesting study, 512 eleventh grade students in twenty-two English and social studies classes in three high schools in the New York area were tested to determine the effect of attitudes upon their responses to reading material. The implications for education in the teaching of objective evaluation of the material read are clearly and convincingly described.

For Early Adolescents

Deep Short. By Jackson Scholz. Morrow, \$2.50.

When Pete Mason signed a contract with a professional team as shortstop, his father began the training of his cousin to take Pete's place in the mills. Pete had one year to make baseball his business career or return to the mills. While practicing at the Florida training camp and playing with a Class B team, Pete met some unusual people and made baseball his business. A baby-sitting third baseman, a superstitious trainer, and a carrot chewing old gentleman help to make *Deep Short* exciting reading.

Ira C. Bennett.

William Penn, Founder and Friend. By Virginia Haviland. Illustrated by Peter Burchard. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$1.50.

Another of the *Makers of America* series, this biography of William Penn successfully presents in simple language some of the ideals for which the Quaker leader stood. Beginning with his boyhood in England and Ireland the author traces the development of Penn's belief in religious freedom to its realization in the American colony. An adequate treatment of a great character which can be read in the middle grades and used for the retarded reader in the upper grades.

Doris H. Moulton

Two and The Town. By Henry Gregor Felsen. Scribner's, \$2.50.

Problems of sex and marriage in adolescence occupy a prominent place in this well-written story. The author succeeds in making the football hero and the attractive girl senior convincing and interesting young people, and he makes his point about responsible behavior frankly but without obvious moralizing. For older adolescents, preferably high school seniors.

John J. DeBoer

Zack Taylor, Young Rough and Ready. By Katherine E. Wilkie. Illustrated by Syd Browne. Bobbs-Merrill, \$1.75.

This story of the life of Zachary Taylor, a part of the *Childhood of Famous Americans* series, appears to be one of the more substantial efforts of this popular group of books. The events selected, the portrayal of the family of young Zack and the discipline of life in the wilderness combine to show the development of the character of the boy who was to become president—although sometimes a bit obviously. Another book which can be used for remedial reading.

Doris H. Moulton

The Golden Trail. By Margery Evernden. Illustrated by Lynd Ward. Random House. \$2.50.

A well-written adventure story of young Ramon Morales who was a member of the Spanish expedition which left Mexico in 1775 to found the city of San Francisco. Bandits add to the many perils of the journey for Ramon but his courage is equal to his trials. At the end of the journey he is given the palomino he loves as a fitting reward. The format is attractive with good print and excellent illustrations in black and white. Recommended.

Laura E. Cathon

The Trojan War. By Olivia E. Coolidge. Illustrated by Edouard Sandoz. Houghton Mifflin, \$3.00.

A successful retelling of a great story for modern young people that presents the Trojan

War, events leading up to it, and the results as a cohesive whole and the people involved as vivid, individual personalities. The attractive format combined with readability and effective illustration add up to a book young people will read for fun. This outstanding book can also be used effectively in the classroom with *Greek Myths*, an earlier book by the same author.

Doris H. Moulton

The South Sea Shilling. By Eric Swenson. Illustrated by Charles Michael Daugherty. Viking, \$3.50.

James Cook's rise from helper in a combined grocery and haberdashery on the Yorkshire coast to a self-taught commander in the Royal Navy was due to his strong-minded singleness of purpose. This is a well-written account of Captain Cook's part in opening up the British Empire, particularly the Pacific Islands, presented with a vividness and clarity which will fascinate readers of biography and travel. The line drawings of things nautical add interest to the subject and share in creating an outstanding book which we may expect to find on many "honor" lists this year.

Elizabeth M. Beal

Port of Missing Men. By Rene Prud'hommeaux. Illus. by Raffaello Busoni. Viking, \$2.50.

This is a mystery packed with curious circumstances surrounding young Dave Brent's inheritance. Dave, his dog Miss Happy, his cousin Serena, and his friend Steve Larrup, amateur detective, attempt to solve the puzzle alone until the situation becomes dangerous. Then, adults and the F. B. I. come to the rescue. Lively and exciting.

Barbara D. Ewell

Guns in the Forest. By Bruce Lancaster. Frontispiece in color by Charles B. Wilson. Little, Brown. \$3.00.

This is a condensed and revised version of the author's popular *Guns of Burgoyne* which is now out of print. It is the story of Kurt Ahrens, a young German lieutenant who served with Burgoyne in his New York campaign. Although the book has lost some of its spirit

because of the condensation, nevertheless it is still a good historical story and will be enjoyed for its adventure by older boys and girls and for its romance by older girls. Recommended.

Laura E. Cathon

A Cap for Corrine. By Zillah K. Macdonald. Messner, \$2.50.

This young novel of adventure and of a nurse's career has the setting of a great New York hospital. Beautiful Corrine Fairchild on her day of graduation could have married into a socially prominent family, but she chose a professional life instead. Memorable characters, realistic scenes of hospital and home nursing, including a major city catastrophe, and a convincing romance make up this fast moving story which will be of particular interest to older girls.

Katherine Porter

Jeb Ellis of Candlemas Bay. By Ruth Moore. Illustrated by W. N. Wilson. Morrow, \$2.00.

This regional story has been abridged from the author's best-selling novel for adults, "Candlemas Bay." The Ellis family had lived in the Maine coast town of Candlemas Bay for almost two hundred years, and Jeb, now sixteen and the oldest of six children, is determined to become a fisherman. The story is of Jeb's valiant courage to help Grampie; Grampie's efforts to care for his three grown daughters, as well as his daughter-in-law, Jen, and her children; and of Jen's resoluteness to meet her own responsibilities.

Katherine Porter

Cue for Treason. By Geoffrey Trease. Vanguard, \$2.75.

This book is not new. It is a new edition of a book that has thrilled young readers before. Popular demand led the publishers to provide fresh, new copies of an adventure story of Elizabethan England. The story will satisfy those who are searching for high adventure in a different era, and it will please those who prefer that the style be unadorned with the language of olden times. Certain sections sug-

gest dramatic interpretation for reasons of both plot and quotable passages.

Naomi C. Chase

Black Tiger. By Thomas C. Hinkle. Morrow, \$2.00.

With his mother, Black Tiger, a wild and beautiful coal black colt, learned to face the dangerous life of the range with spirit and fearlessness. He escaped many times from the horse thieves who were numerous on the range. Tiger loved one human, ranchman Jim Summers, whose kindness he rewarded by saving his life.

Nancy Adams

For the Middle Grades

Polly Roughhouse. By Helen Garrett. Viking, \$2.00.

All energetic young girls and boys who find every new event an adventure will find *Polly Roughhouse* a delightful book. It is just the right length for other "roughhouse" youngsters like the heroine, and it is beautifully illustrated by Myron S. Hall in soft-pencil sketches that interpret the sincere themes of the story.

Naomi C. Chase

Captive of the Delawares. By Evelyn Nevin. Illustrated by Fred Sanchez. Abingdon-Cokesburg, \$1.50.

Based on historical records, this is the interesting story of Frances Slocum who was captured by the Delaware Indians during the Revolutionary War. The frightened, unhappy girl was treated kindly by her captors and at last decided to stay with them and was adopted into the tribe. This account depicts the manners and customs of the Indians and will be very useful as supplementary reading for fourth and fifth graders. The format is good with large print and illustrations in black and white. Recommended.

Laura E. Cathon

Climb a Lofty Ladder. By Walter and Marion Havighurst. (Land of the Free Series) Winston, \$2.75.

In this story, fifteen year old Hans Bremer who is a Swedish immigrant, does his part in

the building of the great Minnesota wheat empire. He is guided by kindly old Andreas Ekeberg. The struggle and hardship of the Swedish settlers in their new homeland is told in a simple and realistic way. Action revolves around the wheat elevator where Hans and Andreas live and work. The title is derived from this unusual setting. Barbara D. Ewell

The Seven Q's. By Electa Clark. Bobbs. \$2.25

One of the vagaries of this ultramodern Queue family is their hasty decision to move from a comfortable city apartment to an abandoned schoolhouse on the sand dunes along Lake Michigan. Here the irresponsible parents and their five children follow their individual inclinations in blissful contentment and no little confusion. The action is double-speared in that there is an effort to learn the identity of a young stranger and a plot to prevent the sale of Oliver's painting—his biggest and oddest, which would necessitate the removal of an entire wall of their home. Some children of 9 to 11 may find the harum-scarum existence of a large family amusing; others will prefer stories of family life grounded on normalcy and a feeling of security. The author has also written *Pennywinks* (1949) and *Pennywink Carnival* (1950). Elizabeth M. Beal

The Crowded House and Other Tales. By Fan Kissin. Houghton Mifflin, \$2.75.

A dozen folk tales, dramatized for radio, offer excellent possibilities for use in class room oral reading, make-believe radio programs, and remedial reading. Sentences are short, dialogue is spontaneous and entertaining, and vocabulary is about fifth grade in difficulty. The book offers many possibilities for use in the classroom or for individual reading. Attractive format, with many illustrations, will appeal to the children. Margaret M. Clark

The Secret of Barnegat Light. By Frances McGuire. Illustrated by Albert Orbaan. Dutton, \$2.50.

Johnnie Lee, vacationer, felt that he really belonged on Long Beach Island after he shared in the fishing voyages and helped capture outlander thieves who cached their loot in the island's historic lighthouse. Mystery with a sea atmosphere for fifth and sixth graders.

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Henry and Beezus. By Beverly Cleary. Illustrated by Lois Darling. Morrow, \$2.50.

Ten-year-old Henry Higgins has a burning desire to have a shiny new bicycle like Scooter McCarthy's. Henry's boldness leads him into many bad situations, from tying his dog to a parking meter to eating dog food on a dare. Suitable black and white illustrations.

Philip I. Brake

Junior Quarterback. By William Heuman. Morrow, \$2.50.

Alan McGregor, whose father and uncle had starred in football at Westwood Academy, chose tennis as his sport at the academy. After much persuasion, he went out for football. At first, he was green and self-conscious. In time, he became a skillful quarterback and one of the best players on the team.

Eugene D. Duff

Alligators and Crocodiles. By Herbert S. Zim. Illustrated by James Gordon Irving. Morrow, \$2.00.

An illustrated account of the growth and development of alligators and crocodiles, this first in a new series by Dr. Zim describes their homes, their swimming and breathing, the laying and hatching of eggs, and many other interesting facts. Every bit of information is interesting and easy-to-understand.

Faith Toney Lewis

Kit Carson Mountain Man. By Margaret E. Bell. Illustrated by Harry Daugherty. Morrow, \$2.00.

This title has the ring of the familiar and the appeal of a Saturday movie to those in the intermediate grades. In a brief 71 pages we see the boy apprentice confined to a saddler's shop in Missouri become the hero of Colonel Fre-

mont's exploration of the uncharted West. His rigid self-discipline and love of adventure prepared Kit Carson to serve his country in a time of crisis. Save for his pony express a war might have been lost. This brief chapter from our country's history illustrates again how each age tends to produce its own men. Mr. Daugherty's illustrations are as stirring as Miss Bell's words and are certain to stimulate the young imagination.

Bette D. Bannister

For Younger Children

Our Friendly Friends. By Louis Slobodkin. Vanguard, \$2.00.

Here is a companion volume to the author's *The Friendly Animals*. It is another "picture book" with captions that, together, form a slight story about some little children and their animal friends. The story is told in rhyme. It is set up in type that is large and all capital letters. The drawings are done in black ink sketches, filled in with soft black, blue, and red. The effect is entirely artistic, but informal. The sense of humor portrayed by the pen makes an appeal to adult readers who will bring the whimsical story to the children who "listen" and "look."

Naomi C. Chase

Bible Story for Boys and Girls. By Walter Russell Bowie. Abingdon-Cokesbury, \$3.50.

A companion volume to the author's book on the New Testament published last spring. A beautiful and at times poetic retelling of many familiar Old Testament stories. Make-up is good, with many black and white and full page color illustrations by Stephanie and Edward Godwin. An outstanding book for modern Protestant readers which will lead to the reading of the King James version of the same stories.

Kathryn E. Hodapp

The Talking Cat and Other Stories of French Canada. By Natalie Savage Carlson. Illustrated by Roger Duvoisin. Harper. \$2.00.

These delightful stories which the author's great-great-uncle, Michel Meloche, a *coureur de bois*, told long ago to eager listeners in a Cana-

dian kitchen are a distinct contribution to American folklore. They are humorous and have a real French Canadian flavor. Excellent for story telling and for reading aloud. The fifteen full-page black and white drawings are very appropriate and the format is good. Recommended.

Laura E. Cathon

A True Fairy Tale. By Alethia Lightner Lewis. Illustrated by Gloria Bultman. The Christopher Pub. House. \$2.00.

A fairy gives young George Washington Carver three gifts: seeing eyes, magic hands, and a green thumb. Helped by the friendly giants Faith, Hope, Courage, Hardwork, and Determination George spends his life wrestling with the enemy giants Hunger, Ill health, Poverty, Ignorance, Rebuff, and Prejudice as he travels the road to the city of Wisdom. The book definitely carries an unexpressed plea for tolerance and education. The emphasis on Dr. Carver's sacrifice and service to his own people may inspire students with the same objective.

Elizabeth M. Beal

Wait and See. By Mary Graham Bonner. Illustrated by John N. Barron. Knopf. \$2.00.

Walter was a born collector, and Grandpa's hint that a field near the house was once an Indian settlement started him on an eager and highly successful search for relics. A pleasing tale for the eight and nine year olds which might rouse interest in collecting as a hobby.

Margaret M. Clark

What's Inside of Plants? By Herbert S. Zim. Illustrated by Herschel Wartik. Morrow, \$1.75.

This book explains in simple language and with good illustrations the vital functions and life processes of plants. From it, young people can easily learn to understand the structure and working parts of plants. The different colored illustrations will add greatly to the knowledge of the young scientist. It is an excellent book for the youngster wishing to explore in science.

Jay Eugene White

What's Inside of Me? By Herbert S. Zim. Morrow, \$1.75.

Dr. Zim's book begins with the organs found inside the trunk. After this, it studies the inside of the skull, discussing the different parts of the brain. Following a study of the heart and the stomach, it presents the skin, the skeleton, and the muscles. With each of these different studies are excellent color illustrations.

James E. Hans

Whitey and the Rustlers. By Glen Rounds. Illustrated by the author. Holiday House, \$1.25.

An episode in which young Whitey's "whole spread," two cows, was cleaned out by four weaselly-looking cattle rustlers...and an appropriate award is forthcoming with their capture. Picturesque, ungrammatical writing, print on the large side, and illustrations mostly of the foreground...this Western will have direct appeal to the 9 year old cowboy enthusiast. A thin book but not a sissy one.

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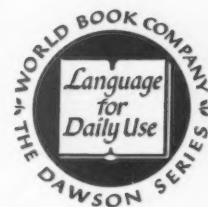
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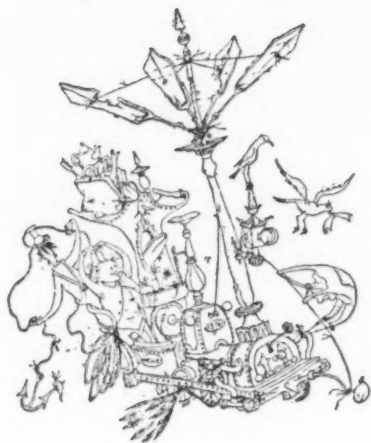
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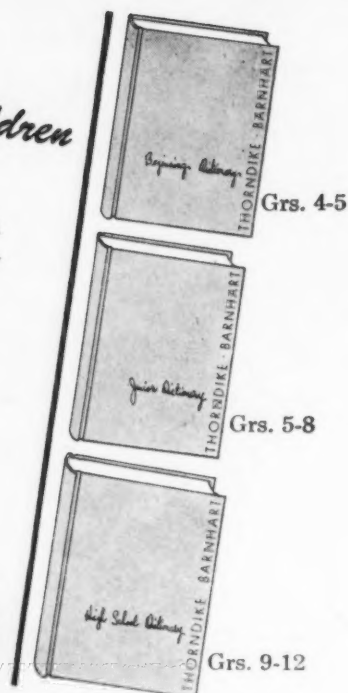
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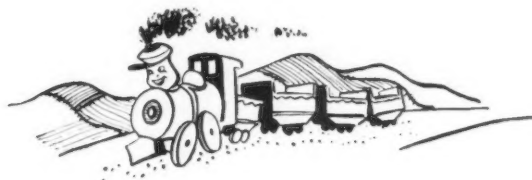
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